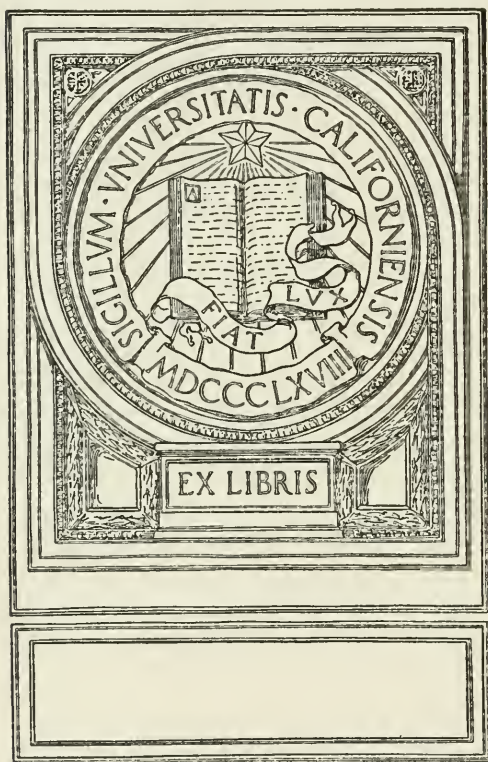




UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
AT LOS ANGELES









*The*  
Development  
OF THE  
Free Public High School  
IN ILLINOIS TO 1860

*By*

PAUL E. BELTING

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor Philosophy, in the Faculty of Philosophy,  
Columbia University

1919

Published by  
ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL  
Springfield  
1919



SCHNEPP & BARNES, PRINTERS  
SPRINGFIELD, ILL.  
1920.

22747—100

\* LA  
267  
B41d

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

---

The author is under obligations to Dr. Paul Monroe for suggesting the subject investigated and the interpretation of facts as well as a critical reading of the manuscript; to Dr. W. H. Kilpatrick for helpful suggestions; to Dr. M. R. Trabue for a careful reading of the entire manuscript; to Dr. I. L. Kandel for helpful criticism; and to his wife for assistance in the preparation of the material.

The author is especially indebted to the county clerks of the older Illinois counties for permitting the use of old records; to the New York Public Library for the use of documentary material; to the Mercantile Library in St. Louis for the use of the J. M. Peck collection of newspapers; to Mrs. Jessie Palmer Weber and her assistants of the Illinois State Historical Library for kindness and courtesy shown in making available all the resources of the State Historical Library; and to the Illinois Historical Society for the publication of the dissertation.

P. E. B.





THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HIGH SCHOOL IN  
ILLINOIS.

CONTENTS.

PART I—THE ACADEMY.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
I. Historical Background— Migration and Settlement; the Northwest Ord- nances .....	7
II. Early Education in Illinois— Individual and Isolated Attempts to Establish Schools .....	15
III. Administrative Organization and Support.....	27
IV. Religious Influence— Catholic; Baptist; Methodist; Presbyterian; Congregational .....	41
V. Some Internal Features— Admission; Tuition; Subjects of Study; Ex- aminations .....	57
VI. Manual Labor Aspect— Origin; Philosophy; Examples; Later Influence	77

PART II—THE COMMON SCHOOL.

VII. The Apprenticeship System— Features; Indenture Records; Relation to Slavery .....	90
VIII. The Free School Law of 1825— Pro-slavery Struggle; Provisions; Authorship; Influence of Jefferson; Free School Districts; Annulment—Support of Common Schools Afterwards .....	96

## CONTENTS—Concluded.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
IX. The Movement of 1835— .....	108
Political Platforms; Survey of the State; Memorials; Proposal for Normal Schools—Teachers—Wages.	
X. Some Agencies that Aided in the Development and Establishment of the Common School— ...	120
Leaders; Literary Agencies; Institutions; Conventions.	
XI. The Free School Law of 1855—.....	141
Defeat of Free Schools in the Constitutional Convention; Provisions; Attitude Toward Free Schools.	
XII. The Beginnings and the Characteristics of the Free Public High School by 1860—.....	155
Gradation; Reorganization of Academies; High Schools Subjects of Study; Admission to High School; Taxation; Public School Boards.	
XIII. The Establishment of the Free Public High School— .....	174
Township High Schools; School Districts Under Special Charter; School Districts Established by General Law Legal Decisions.	
XIV. A Summary of Some Earlier Influences Affecting Later Development and Practice.....	187
XV. Summary and Conclusion.....	195

## CHAPTER I.

---

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

#### *Migration and Settlement.*

Illinois was first organized as a county of the State of Virginia in 1778. The legislature of the mother state gave the territory the name of Illinois, appointed John Todd the first lieutenant governor to take charge of its civil and military affairs but ceded the territory to the confederation in 1784. In 1809, Illinois was organized as a separate territory with Ninian Edwards, Chief Justice of Kentucky, the governor, appointed by President Madison. This office Mr. Edwards held until he was elected to the United States Senate in 1818, at which time Illinois became a state populated by emigrants from the older states.

Migration from the eastern to the western states has usually followed the parallels of latitude. Illinois is an excellent example of such a tendency. The State is about four hundred miles in length, and the parallels which bound it on the north and south include between them the Atlantic States from New Hampshire to North Carolina. Northern Illinois, therefore, was settled by people from Massachusetts and other New England and eastern states, while southern Illinois got its population from Virginia and the South.

The southern half of the state with the river and timber areas was settled first. The pioneer hunter was driven farther inland by a second class, the small farmer, who, in turn, had to advance before the large land-owner whose purpose was to cultivate the land, build a home for a big family, and become a permanent resident of the country.

From Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia came the more enlightened class of southerners, among whom were such leaders as Reynolds, Edwards and Coles. These men possessed great political wisdom and legal talent often rising to positions of importance and prominence in the State and

Nation. Their followers were keen, intelligent men, both progressive and conservative at the same time. All classes, however, were kind and hospitable to stranger and friend alike, but once aroused, they were "bitter, vindictive and passionate opponents in business or politics. Strong in their conviction and prejudices, persistent in the maintenance of existing ideals and institutions, they were the champions of justice, equity and freedom of speech and action."<sup>1</sup>

The "poor whites," so called, came from the Carolinas and Georgia. They were usually ignorant, obstinate, and shiftless.<sup>2</sup> To gain their desires, many times dishonest and unscrupulous means were used. Wages were low and times were hard so that in the bitter struggle to earn a livelihood, ruthless measures were often adopted, without regard for principle. Some of them therefore, constituted one of the elements in the lawless gangs that harrassed places in the wealthier districts of frontier society.

Until 1830, Illinois was almost entirely settled by men from the South who brought with them their political ideals, laws, manners, customs and traditions. It was southern law that formed the model for the territorial code. They were the ones who made the constitution of 1818. Slavery was a southern institution which the convention of 1824 tried to adopt. The first free school law which was passed was southern in origin but it was also the South which caused its revocation.

Instead of a gradual settlement by classes as had been in the south, the hunter, the small hold-farmer, and the large land-owner, men of all classes came rapidly to every part of the State, and especially to the north after 1830. With steam navigation came the merchant, the farmer, the artisan, the preacher and schoolmaster, each equipped to contribute his share in creating a new civilization immediately in the new country. Dwellings, business houses, factories, churches and schools were erected at the same time. Danger from Indian Wars was over, the prairie land needed no clearing, hence the only requisite before wealth could come as the result of industry, was the means of transportation to furnish a market for products.

---

<sup>1</sup> Harris, *Negro Servitude in Illinois*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Boggess, *Settlement of Illinois*, p. 123.



### *The Causes for Migration.*

At least two reasons induced people to migrate to Illinois. The first were general, influences that affected the whole country. The second were local, influences that affected special regions.

Many of the American people have shown a restless and migratory spirit.<sup>3</sup> Ever have they been dissatisfied with existing conditions which they thought could be improved in a country where farms were cheap and land was fertile. With reasonable labor a better living, at least, could be made.

Business men had in several instances failed at home. The wilderness West offered a place of refuge for them. Farm laborers with low wages had learned how to farm. The western lands presented an opportunity for some of them to make a better living. Comparative land values were influential. Large tracts of land could be had in the West cheaper than small farms in the East.

After 1820, western lands sold for \$1.25 per acre in plots as small as 80 acres, both of which were decided inducements for western settlement. The Foote Resolution in the House in 1829 was an inquiry which sought to find out whether the sale of public lands so rapidly was advisable because the laborers in the East were going West, thus taking them from infant industry which ought to be protected. Even Henry Clay, in 1834, reported unfavorably the advisability of ceding public land to the state in which it lay because the older states would lose by migration much of their population and wealth in land rewards offered by the new states.

Moreover, the new settlers painted glowing pictures of the western pioneer. The latter sent letters and circulars to the East showing the wonderful advantages in the new Utopia. Restless and dissatisfied easterners began to feel that the day when all western land was taken up was at hand. Speculators sent exaggerated reports of rapidly growing cities. Plots of new towns were shown in the East, unsold lots were offered at high prices. Newspapers showed the advantages the West held for the laborers and small farmers with little capital.\* Soon products from the West would under-sell home produce in its own market.

<sup>3</sup> Abstract of seventh census, 1850, p. 15, showed that nearly 23% of the white inhabitants of the United States at that time had migrated from the state in which they were born.

\* Buffalo Commercial Advertiser, March 24, 1846.

Competition among the eastern states for improvements to benefit their cities gave easy communication to the West. Frequently inhabitants along the routes of travel were stimulated to move. Many of those along the canals who remained were undersold in their own markets by the westerner. Either they had to sell and go West or reduce their standard of living.

When the water routes, the Erie Canal, the Great Lakes and the Ohio River, were navigated by the steamboat, inconveniences were reduced and the cost of transportation was within reach of the poorest. An important factor in the rapid settlement of the West, therefore, was steam navigation: "Of all the elements of prosperity of the West, of all the causes of its rapid increase in population, its growth in wealth, resources and the improvement of its immense commerce and gigantic energies, the most efficient has been the navigation by steam."<sup>4</sup>

Lastly, speculation in western land from 1834 to 1840 was one element in the period of financial depression the country over. Sometimes eastern speculators, believing fortunes were to be had in western land, bought lots at high prices, though these were still under water or in the woods. Laborers were also involved in the depression. Combinations and unions were formed by laborers in some of the principal industries.<sup>5</sup> High wages were demanded to meet the higher prices which were 85 per cent higher in October, 1836, than in April, 1834.<sup>6</sup> Strikes resulted from the refusal to grant higher wages with a ten-hour day, and several of the principal cities had labor troubles from 1834 to 1837.<sup>7</sup> Employers could not meet the laborers' demands. The hours were reduced, then wages, but prices remained high. The *New York Era*, September 5, 1837, says, "we can state on the best authority that in the eastern states nine-tenths of the factories have been stopped and the same proportion of men, women and children thrown out of employment." Riots occurred, but the most noticeable result was that the "army of the unemployed went West to

<sup>4</sup> Memorial of People of Cincinnati, 1844, p. 28.

<sup>5</sup> Ship carpenters, painters, masons, tailors, shoemakers, factory hands, harness makers.

<sup>6</sup> *Yale Review*, v. 1, p. 94.

<sup>7</sup> Philadelphia, Boston, Hartford, Washington, Trenton, Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis, Natchez.

take up the heritage of the poor man, cheap lands in a new country.”<sup>8</sup>

Of the local causes for migration, curiosity drove many of the New Englanders up the rivers of their own states in the earlier times and later, the desires for better land sent many of their descendants across the mountains to Michigan, Wisconsin and Illinois. The soil of New England was no match for the fertile plains of the West. A number of the younger men, desiring a higher standard of living went West. Finally, New England increased rapidly as an industrial section from 1840 to 1850. Wages were good and prices were high, but the foreign immigrant who began to come at that time made economic and social conditions more unbearable to the American laborer. Large numbers of the latter went West to escape, if possible, the increased limitations placed on life.

Extremely hard times were experienced in the Middle States from 1834 to 1840, as the result of high prices, low wages, and the closing of factories. Taxes were high at the same time, especially among the farmers in New York, due to the construction of the Erie Canal. The margin of profit was partly erased by the competition of western farmers. Moreover, property was being concentrated in the hands of large land-owners, which made rents higher than the cost of land in Illinois.

One of the greatest causes in sending the southern emigrant North was slavery. Free labor in the South received 12½ cents per day in 1832;<sup>9</sup> hence the white man was unable to compete with black labor. Cotton, which took much of the substance from the soil, was continually demanding new land. Moreover a growing slave population crowded out the small land owners and the landless.

Moreover some of the southern states had a complaint against the tariff legislation of 1824 and 1828. Because of it he said that merchants were ruined, laborers were out of work, grass was growing in the streets, houses were falling, the price of real estate was low, rents were nothing, fields were abandoned and interest rates were high.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Yale Review, v. 1, p. 99, quoted by Pooley, p. 335.

<sup>9</sup> House Doc.—Debates—22 Cong. I. Sess., p. 3154.

<sup>10</sup> Senate Debates—22 Cong. I. Sess., p. 80, which was the beginning of the nullification disputes.

Finally, Ohio and Indiana, states that had been members of the Union for a generation or more, sent settlers to eastern Illinois from 1840 to 1860 because there was not enough good land to divide with the sons in the family who desired to establish homes of their own. These youths moved West to the rich plains of Illinois where they were content to stop to make their fortune.<sup>11</sup>

Economically, the settlement of Illinois has been characterized, therefore, as an attempt chiefly on the part of the American farmer and laborer to widen the market and raise the standard of living by taking advantage of the free western lands.

Railroads and lake traffic made Northern Illinois feel itself a part of the North Atlantic States. Wagon roads and river routes created the same feeling in Southern Illinois for the South. Consequently, the institutions in the two sections closely resembled, in origin, those with which the settlers were acquainted in their home states. Northern Illinois developed the free, common school system; Southern Illinois clung to the academy and select school. Secondary education in the North, like the East, began to become democratic; in the South it was aristocratic. Sectionalism, then, from the transportation period on, changed from East and West to North and South.

### *The Northwest Ordinances.*

The ordinances of 1785 and 1787, besides being instruments of government, constituted the first charters of the public school system of the United States.<sup>12</sup> The former reserved the sixteenth section of every township of public land, "for the maintenance of public schools within the township." The third article of the latter said that "religion," morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

<sup>11</sup> Niles Register, v. 52, p. 114. Some names of towns in the prairie district of eastern Illinois are like the same in Indiana and Ohio. Earlier prairie settlers frequently gave Ohio and Indiana as the state of their birth.

<sup>12</sup> After the cession of Virginia's claims to the northwestern territory was executed various plans of government were drawn up the next three years. July 11, 1787, a committee of which Nathan Dane of Massachusetts was chairman, reported a plan of government for the territory northwest of the Ohio River. A slavery clause was added and the bill became a law July 13, 1787. Congress accepted the mode of government in 1789.



April 18, 1818, Congress offered to Illinois for acceptance or rejection.

“1. That section numbered sixteen in every township, and when such section has been sold, or otherwise disposed of, other lands equivalent thereto, and as contiguous as may be, shall be granted to the state for the use of the inhabitants of such township for the use of schools.”

2. “That all salt springs within such state and the lands reserved for the use of the same shall be granted to the said state, and the same to be used under such terms and conditions and regulations as the legislature of said state shall direct; provided the legislature shall never sell nor lease the same for a longer period than ten years at any one time.”

3. “That five per cent of the net proceeds of the lands lying within such state, and which shall be sold by congress from and after the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and nineteen, after deducting all expenses incident to the same, shall be reserved for the purposes following, viz: Two-fifths to be distributed under the direction of congress in making roads leading to the state; the residue to be appropriated by the legislature of the state for the encouragement of learning, of which one-sixth part shall be exclusively bestowed on a college or university.”

4. “That thirty-six sections or one entire township, which shall be designated by the President of the United States, together with the one reserved for that purpose, shall be reserved for the use of a seminary of learning, and vested in the legislature of the said state, to be appropriated solely to the use of such seminary by the said legislature.”<sup>13</sup>

These provisions laid down by congress were accepted by Illinois, August 26, 1818, in a convention assembled at Kaskaskia.

The first three sections of the compact were carried out and a resolution, “that a select committee be appointed to draft a memorial to the President of the United States, requesting him to designate 36 sections of land in the State of Illinois, to be reserved for the use of a Seminary of Learning in said state, in pursuance of the fourth article of the

---

<sup>13</sup> Constitution of Illinois, 1818, p. 22.

compact between the United States and the state of Illinois," was sent to the President in 1822. \*

Although land grants were made on the basis of townships or subdivisions of them, local government was managed by a county commissioners' court of three which resembled that of Virginia except that the Illinois commissioners in each county were elected at large by the people. "The commissioners had a narrow range of discretionary power; but there was no power given to communities to control local affairs or to enact by-laws in promotion of neighborhood interests."<sup>14</sup>

However, there was the germ in these congressional grants of land for school purposes, capable of becoming a highly organized township system under proper conditions. Deeds to land were given by the authority of the township. The government of the United States had set aside for the people of every township a section of land, the proceeds from which were to constitute a permanent township school fund. The State, moreover, made the township a body corporate and politic for school purposes, and gave the inhabitants of each township the right to maintain free schools near the middle of the nineteenth century. But the first school districts of the state followed boundaries that were laid out to meet the needs of a locality rather than following the lines of the surveyed township. The first attempts for the education of the children of Illinois are illustrated in the following chapter.

---

\* The President authorized Gov. Coles to select the 36 sections. The latter reported to the legislature, Dec. 4, 1826, that he had chosen 26, and would soon designate the other 10 sections.

<sup>14</sup> Illinois Intelligencer, Sat., Dec. 14, 1822.

## CHAPTER II.

---

*Early Education in Illinois.*

Frontier settlements in the United States generally have had two classes of people: the one, made up of the strong, the honest and the adventurous; the other, made up of the weak, the shiftless and the vicious. The former were always desirous of providing those opportunities for their children which the parents had missed themselves; the latter were the parasites who tried to exist with the least possible exertion. Nowhere does this contrast stand out so sharply, as it does in relation to education. In the absence of established school systems, individual leaders provided what education they could for the youth. Very often the parasitic, itinerant individuals thought that teaching was the easiest means of existence. Accordingly, bombastic speeches and alluring advertisements were made by the soldier-of-fortune teachers to attract tuition pupils to their high-sounding, fashionable schools. A made to order education could be given to any child so long as the tuition was paid. Quick of growth, popular in name, entertaining in methods of teaching, these institutions preyed on the frontier communities.

Nevertheless, the indomitable, thoroughly honest, intelligent and far-sighted missionary preachers and political leaders planned to start aright a system of education. It is true that their ideal, usually, was the academy, an institution in practice, primarily, for the education of leaders. But in theory, at least, its advantages should be such that the ideal government created by the constitution could be maintained by educating every child. From 1806, when the Vincennes Academy was established, to the time when the free public high school was established, the great argument advanced for the education of the people was that the government of the people, for the people, and by the people might not perish

from the earth. Had free government in Illinois depended on free educational provisions and opportunities for the common man in the early period, it most surely would have perished. Either leaders like Coles and Peck were educated in the states from whence they came, or a few academies in the centers of population in the frontier districts instructed such leaders as Reynolds and Bateman. On the whole, the educational system of Illinois, from 1800 to 1835, was conducted on a purely individualistic basis.

Among the earliest plans for education in Illinois was that presented to the English King and Council in a petition by Leyman, a leader of a colony, to settle on the Mississippi about 1765. He says, "Another step I would propose to be taken which must have great effect towards Accomplishing the design, is that of a Colledge, or Publick School, to be Established in some proper place in that Country, and empowered to give honorary degrees, in Order to instruct the Children of the English, French and Indians, and amongst the honorary Arts, the Art of Agriculture, or Laws of Vegetation should be taught and on Account of their knowledge and Skill in that as well as in other Arts, they should receive Honorary Degrees, and have a sufficient tract of Land appropriated to the use of the Colledge, and the pupils kept to work on the Land a certain number of Hours every day, which would instruct them in the Theory of Agriculture, and enure them to Labour at the same time and if it once toucht their ambition would soon Eradicate from their Minds, the Prejudice the Indians who generally have imbibed, that it is disrespectful for their Men to Work, which at present is an impediment to their Industry. And Occasions there leading in the Intervals of their Hunting, Lazy, Indolent and Unhealthy Lives, and if this plan should Flatter the Ambition of the Indians, so as to meet with their Approbation, I think it promises the best Effects: for what cannot be done by Force of Infant Education when you have a fair Chance for it, by obtaining the Free Consent both of the Parent and Child, or what reformation is to be despaired of, when Clothed, Lodged and Fed, alike according to the English Fashion, but in the Cheapest manner, which may likewise have a happy Effect on the Nations from whence they respectively come. Several



things Encourage me to believe that such an Attempt, would be attended with Success over and above the Great Force there is in Infant Education Amongst all Mankind.”<sup>1</sup>

However, “the opportunity of these pioneers to educate their children was extremely small. If the mother could read, while the father was in the corn field, or with rifle upon the range, she would barricade the door to keep off the Indians, gather her little ones around her and by the light that came in from the crevices in the roof and sides of the cabin, she would teach them the rudiments of spelling from the fragments of some old book. After schools were taught, the price of a rough and antiquated copy of Dilworth’s spelling-book was one dollar, and that dollar equal in value to five now.”

“The first school ever taught for the American settlers, was by Samuel Seely in 1783. Francis Clark, an intemperate man came next. This was near Bellefontaine, in 1785. After this an inoffensive Irishman by the name of Halfpenny, was employed by the people for several quarters. Spelling, reading, writing and the elements of arithmetic, were all the branches attempted to be taught, and these in a very imperfect manner.”

“Following him the late pious and eccentric John Clark, a preacher of the gospel, taught the youth of these settlements gratuitously. He was a good scholar, of Scotch descent and education, and initiated the young men of that day, not only in the rudiments of an English education, but in several instances in mathematics, natural philosophy and the Latin language.”<sup>2</sup>

Governor Reynolds said that “in the county of Randolph there was not a single school, or school-house in 1800, except John Doyle, a soldier of the Revolution under General Clark, might have taught a few children in Kaskaskia at or after this period.”

“In the settlement of New Design, an Irishman, not well qualified, called Halfpenny, at this period instructed some pupils. This school was the only one amongst the Americans at this early day. In the American Bottom, perhaps a school

<sup>1</sup> Ill. Hist. Coll. v. 2, *The New Regime, 1765-1767*, p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> Peck, J. M., *Annals of the West*, p. 707.

might have existed, but not long at a time. Under the guidance of the Clergy in the French villages at rare intervals, schools were established, but their numbers and efficacy were limited.”<sup>3</sup>

The scarcity of schools, the opportunity for instruction, the dearth of books, and the ambition of some youths, who later were the pioneer leaders, were depicted by Governor Reynolds in these words: “Before any common school was established in the settlement, where my father resided, I mounted a horse nearly every evening during the winter, and rode about a mile and a half to the residence of James Hughes, to study under his guidance the arithmetic. Mr. Hughes, although he was raised in the backwoods, and was filled with fun and frolic, was a man of strong mind, and a benevolent heart. He took great pleasure in teaching me arithmetic, and during this winter I studied the most important principles contained in the treatise.”

“We had not the least idea when a school would be established in the neighborhood; and I was advancing in years; so that it was a matter of necessity to study with Mr. Hughes.”

“This was the first step I took towards an education, since we immigrated to Illinois. I attended to my ordinary business on the farm during the day, and in the evenings after the stock was fed I studied arithmetic with Mr. Hughes. In a few years after, schools were established in most of the colonies.”

“In the New Design Robert Lemen, an aged and respectable pioneer of Illinois, taught a school. Others were opened in Goshen Settlement, and other colonies.”

“About the year 1805, a small school was formed in the settlement, where my father resided. I was a scholar at this humble institution during part of the winters, and the wet days, we could not work on the farm, for one or two years while we remained in the settlement. At times the school was not kept up for want of teachers. The scarcity of school books was also a great inconvenience to the scholar.”

“As soon as I commenced the study of arithmetic with Mr. Hughes, I commenced also an ambition and a small en-

---

<sup>3</sup> Reynolds, My Own Times, p. 37.

thusiasm for education generally. This disposition induced me to study and read almost every book I could obtain. It must be recollected at that day in Illinois, not a man in the country, professional or otherwise, had any collection of books that could acquire the name of a library. There were some books scattered through the country but they were not plentiful. Although my father was a reading man, and possessed of a strong mind, yet as far as I recollect, he brought with him to the country no books, except the Bible. Many of the immigrants acted in the same manner as to books."

"One exception I remember was: That John Fulton, who settled in the vicinity of my father, brought with him Rollin's Ancient History. My father loaned it, and I read it day and night at the times I spared from labor. This was the first history I had ever seen, and it gave me a new field of mental existence."

"I made arrangement with my father to go all one winter to school. I had raised a colt he gave me, and I gave it to a man to work in my place on the farm, while I attended school."

"At this school I studied reading, writing and arithmetic. I revised my studies of arithmetic I had commenced with Mr. Hughes. It was my energy and ambition more, I presume, than my capacity: But I learned rapidly—so my teachers always reported."

"At that day, neither grammar, geography, nor books of science ever appeared in schools. And no branch of mathematics was taught except arithmetic. The custom of the day was also to study the lesson aloud. Each one in the school read out at the top of his voice if it suited the convenience of the scholar. This unenviable habit is changed at this day."

"My father purchased a few books, and among them was a treatise on geography. This was a good work in four volumes, and presented a tolerably good geography of the inhabited globe. In this work was also contained a sketch of astronomy, and particularly, the solar system. This study surprised and astounded me. It was incomprehensible to me how it was possible, that the knowledge of the heavenly bodies could be obtained. I reflected on this science with all my humble abilities, and became well instructed on it, so far as

that short sketch afforded me the means. My father understood the general principles of astronomy tolerably well, and instructed me considerably in addition to the treatise mentioned above.”<sup>4</sup>

About the time Illinois was admitted as a state in the Union, educational conditions and opportunities were scarcely better than those which Reynolds described. An article in the *Illinois Intelligencer*, September 5, 1816, says that “at least one-third of the schools were really a public nuisance, and did the people more harm than good; another third about balanced the account, by doing about as much harm as good, and perhaps one-third were advantageous to the community in various degrees.

An example of the schools in Kaskaskia appears in the same paper, January 1, 1818, entitled “To the Patrons of Literature.” J. Cheek “Informs the friends and guardians of erudition that he has opened a school in the town of Kaskaskia, for the instruction of youth, in the different departments of English Literature. He will extend the sphere of instruction so as to include the following sciences, viz: Reading, Writing, Orthography, Arithmetic, English Grammar, Geography, History, Rhetorick, Composition, Elocution, etc. He flatters himself that from his attention to the morals and scientifick avocations of his pupils, he will share no inconsiderable portion of the patronage of the judicious and discerning people.”

“Mr. Cross respectfully informs his fellow citizens of Kaskaskia, and its vicinage, that he intends, should sufficient patronage be afforded, to open a School in this town, for the instruction of youth, in Orthography, Orthoepey, Reading, Writing, English Grammar, Arithmetic and Elocution.

“Scholars who have graduated in these branches of tuition, will be instructed in the rudiments of History, Geography, Natural Philosophy and Mathematics.”

“Mr. C. will endeavor to instill in the minds of his scholars the vital importance of sound moral principle, and correct manners, which he will elucidate, by a regular course of lectures every Saturday. As soon as he can produce the necessary appendages, his school will be Lancasterian. No

---

<sup>4</sup> Reynolds, *My Own Times*, p. 92.



advance payment will be required, but a punctual compliance with the terms of subscription, at the expiration of each quarter is confidently calculated upon.”<sup>5</sup>

Rev. Timothy Flint, a contemporary missionary in Missouri and Illinois, perhaps justly characterizes such teachers and schools in the following manner: “I have been amused in reading puffing advertisements in the newspapers. A little subscription school, in which half of the pupils are abecedarians, is a college. One is a Lancasterian school, or a school of instruction mutuelle. There is the Pestalozzi establishment, with its appropriate emblazoning. There is the Agricultural school, the Missionary school, the Grammar school, the new way to make a wit of a dunce in six lessons, and all the mechanical ways of inoculating children with learning, that they may not endure the pain of getting it in the old and natural way. I would not have you smile exclusively at the people of the West. This ridiculous species of swindling is making as much progress in your country as here. The misfortune is, that these vile pretensions finally induce people to believe that there is a royal road to learning. The old beaten track, marked out by the only sure guide, experience, is forsaken. The parents are flattered, deceived, and swindled. Puffing pretenders take the place of the modest men of science, who scorn to compete with him in these vile arts. The children have their brains distended with the “east wind,” and grow up at once empty and contented.”

“These founders of new schools, for the most part, advertise themselves from London, Paris, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and all have performed exploits, in the regions whence they came, and bring the latest improvements with them. And to what they can do, and what they will do, the object is to lay on the colouring thick and threefold. A respectable man wishes to establish himself in a school in these regions. He consults a friend, who knows the meridian of the country. The advice is, Call your school by some new and imposing name. Let it be understood, that you have a new way of instructing children, by which they can learn twice as much, in half the time, as by the old ways. Throw

---

<sup>5</sup> Illinois Intelligencer, January 6, 1819.



off all modesty. Move the water, and get in while it is moving. In short, depend upon the gullibility of the people. A school, modeled on this advice, was instituted in St. Louis, while I was there, with a very imposing name. The masters—professors, I should say—propose to teach most of the languages, and all the sciences. Hebrew, they would communicate in twelve lessons: Latin and Greek, with a proportionate promptness. These men, who were to teach all this, themselves, had read Erasmus with a translation, and knew the Greek alphabet, and in their public discourses, for they were ministers, sometimes dealt very abusively with the ‘king’s English.’ ”\*

More definite undertakings than those described above for secondary education in this early period, were Belleville Academy and the preparatory department of Vincennes University.

Governor Reynolds says: “In the school near my father’s the teacher was unable to instruct any of his students in the higher branches of mathematics, or the sciences, and I made arrangements with the consent of my father, that I should attend, during the winter of 1806 and 1807, a good school, taught by a competent teacher. This school was situated a few miles east of the present city of Belleville on the land of the present Mr. Schreader. I have often examined, with deep feeling, the tumult of earth where this school once stood. I revere and respect the site with the same feeling as the Jews in ancient times did the city of Jerusalem.”

“At this seminary, I studied land surveying and navigation. I attended also, reading, spelling and writing. I became well conversant in the general principles of mathematics, and particularly in the science of land surveying. My compass and mathematical books, I retain to this day. I studied various branches of mathematics, and the sciences, until I calculated an almanac, but it was never printed. At that day, I never saw a printing office. At this school where I learned surveying, I studied also bookkeeping, of which I thought very little—my writing in this study improved my penmanship, but I think not very much my knowledge.”<sup>6</sup>

\* Flint, *Recollections of the Last Ten Years*, p. 185.

<sup>6</sup> Reynolds, *My Own Times*, p. 94.

The earliest chartered academy serving the territory of Illinois was the preparatory department of Vincennes University. March 26, 1804, four years after the organization of the Indiana territory, of which Illinois was a part until 1809, the federal government reserved one entire township "to be located by the Secretary of the Treasury for the use of a Seminary of Learning."<sup>7</sup> Secretary Gallatin selected a township in Gibson County, the chief city of which was Vincennes. Thereupon, the first territorial assembly, November 29, 1806, passed "An Act to incorporate a University in Indiana territory." This enactment bears the signatures of Jesse B. Thomas, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and P. Menard, President, pro-tem, of the Legislative Council, both Illinois men whose names were written large in the government of the state.

The philosophy underlying the conception of this act is well stated in the preamble:

"Whereas, the independence, happiness and energy of every republic depends (under the influence of the destinies of Heaven) upon the wisdom, virtue, talents and energy of its citizens and rulers,

"And, whereas, science, literature and the liberal arts contribute in an eminent degree to improve those qualities and acquirements,

"And, whereas, learning hath ever been found the ablest advocate of genuine liberty, the best supporter of rational religion and the source of the only solid and imperishable glory which nations can acquire."

"And, fore as much as Literature and Philosophy furnish the most useful and pleasing occupations, improving and varying the enjoyments of prosperity, affording relief under the pressure of misfortunes, and hope and consolation in the hours of death,"

"And considering that in a Commonwealth where the humblest citizens may be elected to the highest office, and where the Heaven-born prerogative of the right to elect, and to reject, is retained and secured to the citizens, the knowledge which is requisite for a magistrate and elector should be widely diffused: Be it therefore enacted, etc."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Hist. Sketch of Ind. Uni., 1820-1904, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> State Supt. Report, 1885, p. 105.

The board of trustees was organized December 6, 1806, with William Henry Harrison, President; funds were raised by gifts, lotteries and the sale of part of the congressional grant; a brick building was erected and a preparatory department started. However, it is doubtful whether this academy amounted to much, because Indiana, itself, failed to recognize the school when statehood was obtained in 1816. Besides the Illinois territorial legislature said nothing about education during the nine years of its existence, 1809-1818.

The educational practices of this period were concerned mostly with "class" schools. The aristocratic tendencies of the Revolutionary days had not yet disappeared. Though some primary education was given, the dominant idea was still that of the old Latin grammar school and its successor, the academy. Private instruction usually had the "dead" languages and other secondary subjects in the curriculum. The equipment, however, in books and apparatus, was severely lacking, though schoolmasters tried to be abreast of the times, at least in the names given to their schools. The teachers, who were usually the proprietors, were in too many instances romantic free-lances with the soldier-of-fortune attitude. Their language, as that of the day, was bombastic and oratorical in style. However, the intellectual leaders of the day realized the swindling game of the quack instructors, and made definite attempts to establish a system of education among the mass of the people as the bulwark of liberty in a republican government.

"The dire poverty of the settlers, the hardships of frontier life, the long Indian wars, the pittance which the lands yielded even when used for school purposes, were all so many hindrances," to the establishment of a system of education.<sup>9</sup>

"But in spite of the prejudices and illiteracy of many of our early citizens, they were by no means an unthinking people; their minds were stimulated by the necessity of invention imposed upon them by their peculiar circumstances; by political discussions in which they were interested from one election to another; by moral questions that were debated among them; and, above all, by the religious discourses to which they often listened, and the controversies between the

---

<sup>9</sup> McMaster. Hist. of the People of the U. S., v. 5, p. 370.

adherents of different sects, in which almost everybody sympathized with one party or another."<sup>10</sup>

In the words of the eminent governor, Mr. Coles, "there is no subject claiming the attention of the legislature of more vital importance to the welfare of the state and its future greatness and respectability, than the provision which should be made for the education of the rising and succeeding generations. Intelligence and virtue are the main pillars in the temple of liberty. A government founded on the sovereignty of the people, and resting on, and controlled by them cannot be respectable, or even long endure, unless they are enlightened. To preserve and hand down to a continuous line of generations, that liberty which was obtained by the valor and virtue of our forefathers, we must make provision for the moral and intellectual improvement of those who are to follow us, and who are to inherit and have the disposal of the inestimable boon of self government."<sup>11</sup>

In conclusion, one must say that the education of the early period was wholly individualistic with little realization of the theoretical plans. A British traveller, in 1765, petitioned the King for the right to establish a school in the valley of the Mississippi in order to teach the English, French and Indians, the useful arts of knowledge. The little instruction that was given was usually through the efforts of someone in the community who had had educational advantages in the older states. Frequently, a missionary preacher opened up a Latin grammar school in his own house, or an academy was established where a knowledge of the languages, philosophy and some practical subjects was kept alive. Itinerant teachers appeared in the villages and purported to bring from the Eastern and European centers of culture the newest and most approved methods of teaching. In reality, they were without character, knowledge, or means of support. To keep the ideal of democracy alive, and to perpetuate free institutions, the territorial legislature established an academy at Vincennes, 1806, which they hoped to have supported from the proceeds of the liberal land grants made by the national government. The career of this institution

<sup>10</sup> Patterson, *Early Society in So. Ill.*, Ferg. Hist. Ser., v. 14, p. 124.

<sup>11</sup> Coles Message to the Legislature, Sen. Jr., 1824, p. 19.

ended in failure because it was planted in a wilderness where protection from Indians, clearing the land, and earning a living, were the prime considerations of the emigrants. But Illinois legislatures continued to encourage education by enacting legislation favorable to the academy, which is the subject of the next chapter.



## CHAPTER III.

---

*Administrative Organization and Support.*

The academy arose as an institution partly to meet the demands of a constantly growing republican society. While it was a school under the control of either public or private incorporation of trustees, it was recognized throughout the country in theory, as a semi-public institution. Most of the eastern, southern and middle states recognized its public function by assisting in its foundation and support. Public lands, as in Georgia, by the act of 1783, was one of the bases of endowment, while New York, in 1813, established a literary fund the income from which was distributed to the academies.

Illinois, likewise, recognized the public function of the academies by giving legislative sanction to groups of individuals to establish such schools. The poor should always be taken care of; boys and girls of all classes should be educated free when the funds of the local institutions permitted; religious freedom was insisted upon; occasionally, the trustees were elected by the public at large, and the legislature regarded its own action, public. Moreover, the state allowed and sanctioned, in some instances, the use of the income from the school lands for the support of academies; distributed to the academies their share of the common school fund, and allowed communities to tax themselves for the support of such institutions.

In fact, the academy was permitted to do almost anything. The legislature assumed no continuous policy in the charters that it granted. The powers, duties and organization were left to the will of the incorporators generally. The laissez faire policy of the government followed the conscious democratic ideal of individual liberty after chartering the institution. The administrators had particular purposes in view which they wanted executed. Girls who had had little

opportunity in the colonial Latin grammar schools of the East were here admitted on almost equal terms. Boys were educated in separate institutions or with the girls in the same institution. Intellectual, moral or physical aims were emphasized as the educational ideal according to the bias of the organizers. The whole country, however, was agreed that the academy should supply teachers for the common schools, so that it was in reality the forerunner of the normal schools. A closer examination of the administrative organization, purposes, and the financial support of the academy, follows:

From 1818 to 1848, the legislature of Illinois granted charters to 125 educational corporations by special act, rather than by general law. Although a corporation law was enacted in 1848, the general assembly continued to charter schools by special legislation until the adoption of the constitution of 1870, which forbade specific laws for corporations of learning except those under the control of the state.<sup>1</sup>

The first general assembly chartered Belleville, Madison and Washington Academies, the first and last of which were soon in operation. The semi-public character of the chartered and some of the private academies was shown in these ways:

1. A group of the community undertook to educate its youth: "Whereas several inhabitants of the town of Edwardsville and county of Madison, have entered into arrangements, to build, by subscription amongst themselves, an academy for the education of youth; and whereas so laudable and useful an undertaking is deserving of legislative sanction, therefore, be it enacted \* \* \*'<sup>2</sup>

2. The trustees of Belleville, Madison and Washington Academies were trustees of the towns in which the academies were located. In fact, suffrage was defined in these charters, and those who voted for town trustees elected academic trustees.<sup>2</sup>

3. Many of the charters carried provision for the free education of the poor, and a few, for the free education of the Indian: "And, whereas, the establishment of an institution of this kind in the neighborhood of the aborigines of

<sup>1</sup> Harker, III. Ed. Cor. under Special Charter.

<sup>2</sup> Session Laws, I. Sess., p. 48.

the country may tend to the gradual civilization of the rising generation, and, if properly conducted, be of essential service to themselves, and contribute greatly to the cause of humanity and brotherly love, which all men ought to bear to each other, of whatever colour, and tend also to preserve that friendship and harmony which ought to exist between the government and the Indians. Be it, therefore, enacted, and it is hereby enjoined on the said Trustees to use their utmost endeavors to induce the said aborigines to send their children to the university for education, who, when sent, shall be maintained, clothed and educated at the expense of the said institution.”<sup>2</sup> Also, “The trustees shall be enjoined to cause the children of the poor people, in the said county, to be instructed gratis.”<sup>2</sup> Even, it was contemplated, when the funds of the institution should permit that all the youth were to be instructed free, “in all or any of the branches of education which they may require.”<sup>2</sup>

4. In other than academies for female education, it was provided that girls as well as boys were to be educated, when sufficient money was at hand: “That it shall be the duty of the trustees, as soon as the funds of the academy will admit of it, to establish an institution for the education of females; and to make such by-laws and ordinances for the government thereof, as they shall deem proper and necessary.”<sup>3</sup>

5. In practically every charter that was granted, religious freedom was recognized as a public duty. “No preference shall be given, nor any discrimination be made in the choice of trustees, professors, teachers or students, on account of religious sentiments; nor shall the trustees, professors, or teachers, at any time make by-laws, or ordinances, or regulations, that may in any wise interfere with, or in any manner, control the right of conscience or the free exercise of religious worship.”\*

6. Public election of the trustees in several of the chartered academies was required; “And, be it further enacted, that all free white male inhabitants of the age of twenty-one years who have resided for six months immediately preced-

<sup>2</sup> Session Laws, I. Sess., p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> State Supt. Report, 1885, p. 105.

\* In 1841, the legislature repealed the clause of the law which had forbidden the establishment of theological departments in Academies and Colleges.

ing the election within the following limit. . . . . shall be, and hereby authorized to elect seven trustees on the forenoon of the day appointed for the election of members to the next general assembly of this state, and on such election day forever thereafter.”<sup>4</sup>

7. The legislature, itself, specifically stated that it regarded such charters as public acts: “Be it, further enacted, that this act shall be deemed to be a public act, and as such shall be construed benignly and favorably, in all courts and places for every beneficial purpose therein mentioned.”<sup>5</sup>

Ordinarily, the preambles of the charters, or the charters themselves, or constitutions of school societies, explained the purpose for which the organizations were made.

1. The most usual statement of the purpose of these associations was that, “the dissemination of useful knowledge should be the only object contemplated.”<sup>6</sup>

2. The preamble of the Jacksonville Academy stated that the high, intellectual and moral culture of women was its object: “Whereas, the vast importance and urgent necessity of extending the blessings of Education to all classes of American Citizens are felt and acknowledged by all enlightened patriots and Christians; and, whereas, the power of female influence over the intellectual and moral character of the community must ever be too great for any or all other causes entirely to counteract. Commencing as it does with the first dawn of infant intelligence and forming perhaps the most important and certainly, the most desirable part of that character, before any other cause can begin to act upon it, and accompanying it through all the subsequent stages of its development; considering, too, that in the present important crisis of our beloved Republic, no one effort ought to be withheld which can tend to give permanency to its foundations, the intelligence and virtue of the people; therefore, Resolved, that an academy ought to be immediately established in this state, to be devoted exclusively to female education; and that Jacksonville, in Morgan county, is, in our opinion, a situation highly favorable for the successful operation of such an institution.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Session Laws, I. Sess., p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> Session Laws, 1834-5, State Rep. 1867, p. 261.



3. The Bloomington Female Seminary, intended to promote the general interests of education, "and to qualify young females for the honorable and useful discharge of the various duties of life."<sup>6</sup>

4. Some of the academies had a normal school department for the education of teachers. "A department is attached to this school for the instruction of teachers."<sup>7</sup>

5. The Hillsboro Academy was an example of an institution that existed for the education of both boys and girls: "The design of the institution is to accommodate those of either sex who may wish to pursue a systematic and thorough course in Education, in the various English branches or in the languages."<sup>8</sup>

6. The Rushville High School Association declared: "The sole object of this corporation shall be for the promotion of *science* and literature, and the general interest of Education, and its corporate powers shall be similar to those conferred upon other corporate bodies for the advancement of education."<sup>9</sup>

7. A distinctly moral purpose was given as the reason for establishing some academies. Monticello Seminary was founded on the principle that education should have reference to man's relation to God, Christ, and the future world, in accordance with the Christian religion.<sup>5</sup>

8. The physical education of the students was one purpose for which some schools were established, but there is no evidence that physical education as we now understand the meaning of that term was given.

9. The trustees of the Monroe Academy were library trustees, whose additional duty was to circulate books among the people of the community: "That there shall be established in the said county, a public library, to be called the Monroe Circulating Library, and that the trustees of the said academy shall be the directors of the said library society, who shall have power to make such rules and regulations for the government of the same, as they shall deem proper."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Session Laws, 1835-6.

<sup>7</sup> Sangamo Jr., Oct. 21, 1837.

<sup>8</sup> Sangamo Jr., Oct. 21, 1837.

<sup>9</sup> Session Laws, 1844-5, p. 311.

<sup>10</sup> Session Laws, 1827.



10. Several academies were established as manual labor schools, of which more will be said later.

11. Finally, some school associations were formed for the education of *all* of the children of the locality—"all," meaning the children of the common people.<sup>11</sup>

One of the most interesting and unusual ways of electing the seven trustees for each of the first three academies is defined in the following manner: "Be it farther enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the several persons herein before named, to wit: Benjamin Stephenson, Joseph Bowers, Robert Latham, John Todd, Joseph Conway, Abraham Prickett, and Theophilis W. Smith, be and they are hereby appointed trustees in the town of Edwardsville in the aforesaid county of Madison to continue in office until the election of their successors as herein after provided." The time for the election is stated in the act, notification of which was posted in public places, the election district is defined, and the qualifications for suffrage are given.<sup>12</sup>

Danville Academy, a public joint stock company, appointed twenty-seven commissioners from the five surrounding counties to solicit and receive stock. When \$1,500 had been collected, the commissioners were to call an election in three weeks, notice of which was to be posted in six of the most public places in the county, of the time of holding the election for trustees. The election was held at the court house in Danville between the hours of twelve and six p. m. of the day determined upon. Moreover, the commissioners were appointed to act as judges of the election. Subsequent elections were to be held annually, the first Monday in October. Those who had the privilege of voting for trustees were stockholders who had paid on, or before the said election day, five dollars on each share subscribed and the remainder, within six months.<sup>13</sup>

The church was represented on the board of trustees of many academies: "The trustees of this institution shall consist of nine, who shall be elected as follows: one-third of the whole number by the Presbyterian Church N. S. of Rushville, one-third by the stockholders, and the remaining by the

<sup>11</sup> Sangamo Jr., June 5, 1845.

<sup>12</sup> Session Laws, 1. Sess., 1819, p. 48.

<sup>13</sup> Session Laws, 1836-37.

patrons of the school for the time being, and they shall hold their office for the time of three years.”<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, this method for the perpetual succession of policy was provided: the trustees were to hold “their office for the term of three years, except from the first election, when one-third of the number shall be elected for three years, one-third for the term of two years, and the remaining for the term of one year, and any year thereafter, one-third of the whole number shall be elected for the term of three years, at such a time and in such a manner as may be prescribed by the by-laws of the institution.”<sup>14</sup>

Town trustees, ministers of religion, county school commissioners and stockholders were members of the board of trustees; the term of office, manner of election, and number varied to suit the ideas of the incorporators rather than following, or having a fixed policy of administrative organization.

The powers and duties of the trustees of the academies covered a wide range. They called special meetings to transact the business of the academy; made contracts for the repairing and erection of buildings; passed by-laws and ordinances for the conduct and government of the school; filled vacancies in their own body; elected a principal and teachers; determined salaries; removed officers for misconduct; appointed committees of their own number; received money subscribed for the institution, and appointed their own treasurer, secretary, stewards, managers and other necessary officers.

“The chairman of the board shall have power to call special meetings, giving five days previous notice thereof, a majority at any stated, adjourned or special meeting, shall form a board of quorum, and a majority of them shall be capable of doing and transacting all the business and concerns of the said academy, and particularly of entering into contracts for erecting and repairing any building or buildings necessary for the said institutions, of making and enacting by-laws and ordinances for the government of the said academy and not contrary to the constitution and laws of the United States, or of this state; of filling vacancies in the

---

<sup>14</sup> Session Laws, 1844-5, p. 311.

board of trustees occasioned by death, resignation or removal out of the state; of electing and appointing the principal professors and teachers of said academy; of agreeing with them for their salaries, and of removing them for misconduct, or breach of the laws of the institution; of appointing committees of their own body to carry into execution all and every resolution of the board; of appointing a chairman, treasurer and secretary, out of their own number; and stewards, managers, and other customary officers for the taking care of the estate, and management of the concerns of the institution."

The trustees of the chartered academies, after 1830, were specifically made bodies politic and corporate, "with power to sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, to acquire, hold and convey property, real and personal, to have and to use a common seal, to alter the same at pleasure, to make laws for its regulation provided they are not inconsistent with the laws of the United States and this state."<sup>15</sup>

Some restrictions of power placed upon trustees were that they should "hold the property of the said institution for the purpose of female education, and not as a stock for individual benefit of themselves, or of any contribution to the endowment of the same; and no particular religious faith shall be required of those who become trustees or students of the institution."<sup>16</sup>

Sometimes the trustees regulated and prescribed the course of study; fixed the rate of tuition; purchased books and regulated the conduct of pupils: "The trustees of said high school association shall have authority from time to time to prescribe and regulate the course of studies to be pursued in said high school, and in the preparatory department thereof; to fix the rate of tuition, to make rules for the general management of the affairs of the said high school, and for the regulation of the conduct of the students, and to add, as the ability of the said corporation shall increase, and the interest of the community shall require, additional departments, for the study of all or any of the solid, useful and

<sup>15</sup> Session Laws, I. Sess., p. 48.

<sup>16</sup> Session Laws, 1834-1835, Sec. 1.

profitable branches of classical, mathematical and philosophical literature.”<sup>17</sup>

*Financial Support.*

School lands, very early, were the basis of any state support that was given to the academies. An act approved January 27, 1821, by the state, gave the trustees of Belleville Academy the “power and authority to lease out, upon such terms and conditions as to them shall seem meet, for any time not exceeding ten years, section number sixteen, in township number one, north of range number eight, west of the third meridian, reserved for the use of schools, for the benefit of the inhabitants of said township.”

“Be it further enacted, That the trustees of Belleville Academy shall and may appropriate one-half of the net proceeds of the annual profits accruing from the rents of said sixteenth section, to the use and benefit of said academy, and shall reserve the other half of said rents and profit, to and for the use of schools in the north half of said township, to be paid over and applied in such manner as shall be pointed out by law.”

“Be it further enacted, That there shall be a meeting of the male inhabitants above the age of twenty-one years, residing in the north half of said township, at Belleville, on the first Monday in April next; which meeting shall take into consideration the propriety of permitting the trustees of Belleville Academy to apply the whole of the rents and profit to the said Academy, and should said meeting consent, the whole of the rents and profits of said section shall be applied to the use of said Academy for such term of time as said meeting shall agree to.”<sup>18</sup>

The state at other times authorized the use of some of the money of the township fund for the establishment of a school: “The inhabitants of township five south, range six east, of the third principal meridian, upon being incorporated as required by law for school purposes, be and they are hereby authorized to use the sum of two hundred dollars of the interest accruing from said township fund, to the erec-

<sup>17</sup> Session Laws, 1844-1845, Sec. 3, p. 311.

<sup>18</sup> Session Laws, 1821, p. 34.



tion of a frame or brick schoolhouse in the town of McLeansboro in said township.”<sup>19</sup>

Another example of aid given by the state is that in which “the school commissioners of Jefferson County be authorized and required to receive the said schedule of the school taught in the Mount Vernon Academy in the year 1840, and duly certified by the trustees and teachers thereof, and apportioned thereon its distributive share of interest of the school fund due for 1842, according to the schedules filed for distribution in January, 1843; provided that all schedules in said county, regularly certified for that year, and notified to the said commissioner before he actually made the apportionment of interest of that year, shall be paid in like manner.”<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, the state authorized money to be paid to some academies: “The school commissioner of Coles county is hereby authorized and required to pay to the order of the president and trustees of the Charleston Seminary two hundred dollars per year, out of the distributive share of the state fund, for the purpose of education, to the county of Coles; and the said trustees are hereby authorized to expend said money in such manner as they may think proper for the use and benefit of said seminary.”<sup>21</sup>

It was the common practice for academies to receive their distributive share out of the township school fund for maintaining a common school. The act of 1835 distributed the interest from the state school fund to counties in proportion to the number of inhabitants under twenty-one years of age. “Nor shall this act be so construed so as to prevent said school from receiving its just proportion from the township and state fund, as other schools do; and said trustees shall perform the same duties in regard to said school, for the purpose of obtaining their proportion of said school fund, as is or may be required of trustees of schools in other townships.”<sup>22</sup>

The law relative to the Winchester male and female preparatory and common school said that “nothing in this act shall be so construed as to prevent either of the above

<sup>19</sup> Session Laws, 1837, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> Session Laws, 1842-3, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> Session Laws, 1839-40, p. 131.

<sup>22</sup> Session Laws, 1839-40, p. 56.



named institutions from receiving their proper proportions of money appropriated by law for common school purposes."<sup>23</sup>

Even organizations like mechanics' unions received their share of the state school fund for keeping a common school. The Springfield Mechanics' Union, "on the establishment of their common school, shall receive from the school commissioner of the county the same amount of money, in the same proportion, and apply the same to such tuition, in the same manner as other common schools are kept and paid."<sup>24</sup> The school established by this act immediately was opened under the name of the Springfield City Schools.

It was also the custom for private academies, unchartered, to receive state aid. An academy in Peoria, in 1840, says this about its funds: "This is not a chartered institution, nor aided by any public funds, except that it shares the public school fund together with the common schools of the town."<sup>25</sup>

The state virtually aided academies by a general law of 1842, which exempted from taxation ten acres of land owned by any literary institution; and for colleges and academies exempted a hundred sixty acres, if actually used as its location and domain, with all buildings, libraries, and apparatus.<sup>26</sup>

The idea of taxing the people of the community for supporting an academy is found in some of the charters: "The trustees of the town of Winchester may levy and collect a tax not exceeding one per centum on all taxable property in said town, to be applied to purposes of education, as said trustees shall from time to time direct: Provided, That before any tax can be levied as aforesaid, and on application of twelve citizens of the town, the trustees shall cause an election to be held, where each inhabitant residing within the incorporate limits of said town, may have the privilege of voting for or against a tax, and if a majority of two-thirds of the votes given at said election shall be in favor of a tax, then and in that case the trustees may levy a tax and in no other."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Session Laws, 1841, p. 290, Sec. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Session Laws, 1839-40, p. 74, Sec. 2.

<sup>25</sup> Peoria Directory, 1844, p. 115.

<sup>26</sup> State Supt. Report, 1883-4, p. 116.

<sup>27</sup> Session Laws, 1841, p. 290, Sec. 7.

The original proprietors of the town of Payson were far-sighted enough to make provision at a future time for the establishment of an academy by using twenty per cent of the proceeds from the sale of lots in that town for that purpose: "The original proprietors of the town of Payson, in their proposal for the sale of town lots, stipulated twenty per cent of the amount of sales of town lots should be appropriated toward the establishment of a Seminary of Learning from which fund, now accrued, amounts to \$1,300.<sup>28</sup>

Individuals, themselves, aided secondary education by endowments. The founder and benefactor of Monticello Seminary set aside \$10,000 for that purpose, as early as 1834. The building was begun in 1836 and opened for pupils in 1838.<sup>29</sup>

A few public-spirited men bequeathed money for the erection and establishment of academies. Silas Hamilton left \$4,000 for the creation of the Hamilton Primary School to educate the children of his friends and neighbors.<sup>30</sup>

Tuition was one of the factors in the support of education. The Sangamo Journal, April 21, 1838, stated that "academies and colleges are founded by private enterprise, and supported by individual liberality and munificence. Those who seek these institutions must necessarily pay in proportion to the benefit received."<sup>31</sup>

Occasionally, academies were public joint-stock companies, so that the money necessary for the founding of schools was raised by the sale of stock, worth from ten to twenty-five dollars a share, allowing the share holders free tuition for every share held, and with the privilege of voting on the policies of the institution: "The said academy, when erected and in operation, shall at all times be open for use and the privilege of every white person, within the United States, who may wish to be instructed by the instructors or instructresses, employed by the trustees thereof; Provided, Said free white person will comply with the laws, and pay the sum affixed by the said trustees, for the instruction of students attending the same; Provided nevertheless, that

<sup>28</sup> Session Laws, 1841, Sec. 7.

<sup>29</sup> State Supt. Report, 1867-8; p. 267.

<sup>30</sup> Session Laws, 1839-40, Preamble.

<sup>31</sup> Sangamo Jr., April 21, 1838.

each and every stockholder in said institution shall be entitled to the admission of one pupil in the same for each and every share he or she may legally hold therein. On payment of ten dollars to the treasurer of the institution every free white person shall be considered a stockholder.”<sup>32</sup>

The stock of the Rushville High School Association “shall consist of shares of twenty-five dollars each, to be subscribed for in the manner that the commissioners herein after named, or the trustees when elected shall direct, and shall be deemed personal property, and shall be transferable on the books of said corporation in such manner as the board of trustees may prescribe; the capital stock shall not exceed ten thousand dollars, and its funds, rents and privileges shall be used only for the purposes of education herein declared.”<sup>33</sup>

Every charter placed a limitation on the amount of property to be held. This varied from the one hundred thousand acres of land allowed to Vincennes University, to twelve acres of land allowed the Jacksonville Female Academy. But very few cases have been found where more than a thousand acres of land was allowed to chartered academies. The legislature that granted the Jacksonville charter had this to say relative to the property to be held by the academy: “The lands within the bounds of this State, held in perpetuity by this charter, shall not exceed twelve acres, held at any one time; and if donations in land shall be made at any time to said corporation, the same may be received and held in trust by said board of trustees, and shall be sold within three years from the date of such donation for the benefit of said institution; in failure whereof, the land so given shall revert to the donor or grantor of the same and the said board of trustees shall in no case lease or rent out any land so held in trust as aforesaid.”<sup>34</sup>

The amount allowed to Rushville High School Association was a little larger: “The lands, tenements, and hereditaments, to be held in perpetuity by virtue of this act by said corporation, shall not exceed three hundred and twenty acres.”<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Session Laws.

<sup>33</sup> Session Laws, 1844-45, p. 311.

<sup>34</sup> Session Laws, 1834-5.

<sup>35</sup> Session Laws, 1844-45, p. 311.

The chartered academies were quasi-public institutions because, (a) a group in the community undertook to educate its youth; (b) the trustees were frequently elected by the public; (c) the poor children of the Indians were educated gratis; (d) all youth were to be educated free when the funds of the academy were sufficient; (e) religious freedom was recognized as a public necessity; (f) the legislature regarded the charter a public act.

The purposes for which academies were established were (a) to disseminate useful knowledge; (b) to give women high intellectual and moral culture; (c) to fit youth for the various duties of life; (d) to prepare teachers for the common schools; (e) to promote science and literature; (f) to safeguard and develop the physical body; (g) to circulate books among the people; (h) to inaugurate a system of manual labor with literary education; (i) to educate the children of the "people".

The trustees, varying in number in the different academies, were elected or appointed, with powers that were usually conferred on bodies corporate and politic, though no fixed rule was adopted in that respect. The administrative organization was fixed to suit the will of the individual incorporators, with few exceptions.

Financially, academies were benefited by the sale or rent of school lands, when that was deemed advisable; were occasionally aided in establishment by the funds of the township in which they were located; were usually given their share of the school fund for keeping a common school; were promised a state subsidy; were to receive local taxes if the people of the community wished to vote them; were endowed by gifts directly, or received money by wills; were supported by tuition, and had a fund created by the sale of stock divided into a stipulated number of shares. Religious organizations used one or several of the means above suggested in the support they gave academic education. The next chapter, therefore, is a consideration of the religious influence on education.



## CHAPTER IV.

---

*Religious Influence.*

In spite of the academic legislation provided by the state, little machinery existed for the administration, organization, and supervision of education outside of the church. In colonial days, a close relation existed between the church and the school, and that intimacy continued to about the middle of the nineteenth century. It was but natural that the minister should direct and supervise instruction because he was well educated, entirely qualified, and had sufficient leisure time. The aim of education, the subject matter, and teacher certification, all, had a religious tone.

The grammar school had grown up under the religious denominations in the colonies. But there came a time of religious revival, about 1740, in England and her colonies, when the established mode of worship was questioned. New denominations could only perpetuate their religious beliefs by establishing schools. Likewise, there was a revival in education so that new institutions were necessary, in education as well as in religion, to meet the new ideals, one expression of which was the academy. The connection of the church with the academy was somewhat different than its relation to the Latin grammar school. No longer was a religious test required of the teachers, no longer was religion the primary subject of study, but the churches still kept a large part of the control and organization of the academy in their hands. There was no other body yet developed that could assume the responsibility.

The Catholics, the Baptists, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Congregationalists sent missionaries to Illinois who established schools as well as preached the gospel. One of the chief institutions established by the pioneer



preachers, with the exception of the Catholics,<sup>1</sup> was the academy, because the missionaries came to Illinois at the time of the academy period. Home organizations sent representatives to the new West to establish branches, convert the Indian and the pioneer, and to educate the children of the forest and of the newcomers. How conscientious and faithful those talented missionaries were, is evidenced by the individual schools that they established and maintained, frequently at their own expense. They paved the way for the later tides of emigration, the latter making it possible to maintain a local system of academic education. The frontier was not free from jealousies for the hospitable southerner hated the shrewdness of the Yankee. Religious disputes naturally arose between the former and the latter, traces of which are found in the struggle for and maintenance of the academies. Although the Yankee left his mark on those institutions, he forsook them for the common school. A closer survey of the religious educational influence, therefore, is relevant.

The French Jesuits exerted the earliest religious and educational influence in the territory that is now the state of Illinois. Rev. J. M. Peck had this to say of Kaskaskia under French rule: "In olden time, Kaskaskia was to Illinois what Paris is at this day to France. Both were, at their respective days, the great emporiums of fashion, gayety, and I must say, happiness also. In the year 1721, the Jesuits erected a monastery and college in Kaskaskia, and a few years after it was chartered by the French government."<sup>2</sup>

Kaskaskia, in 1796, though mostly French in population, but under English control, had degenerated to such an extent that Austin Ville said the Jesuit college in that city was then in ruins, although the city and the college were very flourishing under the French government.<sup>3</sup>

However, the Catholics maintained, from time to time, in the French settlement of Kaskaskia, a convent for the education of young ladies. In 1828, this school is spoken of as

<sup>1</sup> The Catholics had a college at Kaskaskia in the early part of the 18th century, but it fell into disuse at the end of the French period. In the early part of the 19th century a similar institution was revived in the same town, but that was not typical of Catholic activity in other parts of the state until about the close of our period.

<sup>2</sup> Powers, *History of Springfield*, p. 6, quotes Peck.

<sup>3</sup> *Doc. Am. Hist. Rev.*, April, 1900, p. 538.

being at the zenith of its influence for the people of the West, and was deservedly very popular.

The leaven of the whole educational movement in the beginnings of Illinois was the work of the Protestant preachers and missionaries. According to Rev. J. M. Peck, a Baptist minister, his denomination had these missionary preachers in the state: Josiah Dodge, 1784; James Lemen, 1784; David Badgley and Joseph Chance, who organized the first church in 1796; John Clark, 1797, and W. Jones, 1806. By 1807, five Baptist churches had formed an association.

Governor Reynolds mentioned these Methodist missionary ministers: Joseph Lillard, 1793; Hosea Riggs, 1796; Benjamin Young, 1804; T. Harrison, 1804; J. Oglesby, 1805; C. R. Matheny, 1806; Jesse Walker, 1806; Bishop McKendree, 1807; Peter Cartwright, 1824. By 1815, four Methodist-Episcopal circuits had been established.

As was stated in the discussion of early education in Illinois, James Lemen, a Baptist preacher, opened one of the first schools. Father John Clark was a conspicuous and efficient character in the pulpit and the schools. He taught many of the rising generation of that day the general principles of education.<sup>4</sup>

Smith and Mills, in their missionary tour of the West, showed that preachers would be welcomed to keep schools. "Governor Edwards assured us, that a preacher of popular talents would receive a salary of \$1,000 per annum, for preaching a part of the time, and instructing a small school."<sup>5</sup>

The constitution of the Foreign Missionary Society of the Valley of the Mississippi gave one of its objects to be the promotion, "by all suitable means, within the Valley of the Mississippi, the missionary spirit in theological seminaries, colleges, academies, and the community."<sup>6</sup>

The legislature of the state, in 1821, passed an act to encourage learning in White county, making the township trustees and church trustees coordinate bodies in conducting a school for the township: "Whereas, there is a society of Christians, called Cumberland Presbyterians, who have erected a meeting house for public worship on the sixteenth

<sup>4</sup> Reynolds, *My Own Times*, p. 194.

<sup>5</sup> Rep. Miss. Tour, by Mills and Smith, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> First Annual Rep. Foreign Miss. Soc., p. 4.

section in township five south, of range eight east, of the third principal meridian, in this state, and whereas, the said house may serve to have the gospel preached therein, and likewise may be used for a schoolhouse for the township. Therefore,

“Sec. I. Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly, that two or more of the county commissioners of White county are hereby authorized and required to lease five acres of land of said section sixteen, in township five south, range eight east, including said meeting house and burial ground, to the trustees of the township for ninety-nine years, for the use of said society of Cumberland Presbyterians, and for the use of schools of said township.”

“Sec. 2. Be it further enacted, that the said school which may be taught in said house shall be under the direction of the trustees of the township and said society of Cumberland Presbyterians. There shall never be given any preference to one sect of people over another in said school, but at all times, the said society of Cumberland Presbyterians shall be entitled to hold divine service in said house during said lease.”<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps one of the most influential men in the religious, social, and the educational life of the people of early Illinois, was John Mason Peck. He was born at South Farms, Conn., in 1787, and received his education in the common schools and the academy of his town. He studied science, literature and medicine in Philadelphia. The year 1818 found him teaching school in St. Louis. Settling in Illinois soon after, he preached and taught school. January 1, 1827, he invited all those favorable to the establishment of a college or seminary to meet at his home, in Rock Spring, St. Clair county, which was situated on the principal stage route to Vincennes, seventeen miles east of St. Louis.

Peck was engaged a year in raising funds for the institution to be established. He and his hired men cut the timber and built the school. Five hundred dollars and twenty-five acres of land were contributed by Peck himself. Nine trustees were appointed and one hundred shares of stock at ten

---

<sup>7</sup> Session Laws, 1821, p. 153.

dollars a share were to be sold to support the two departments to be established.<sup>8</sup>

Rock Spring Theological and High School was the name given to this institution. "The general plan of study is accommodated to the circumstances of the preachers of the gospel, and to the wants of the country. Ministers, who have families, and those who are somewhat advanced in life, may attend the Institution as may suit their convenience. It is established on liberal principles, though under the particular control of the Baptist denomination."<sup>9</sup>

"The second department is to be a scientific and literary institution for the accommodation of any class of students of approved character, and it is to be conducted on the principles of a High School. A professor of mathematics and natural philosophy, who shall be the principal of the High School Department, and direct the studies in languages," is to be appointed.<sup>10</sup>

Joshua Bradley, holding an A. B. degree, Brown college, was the first president, and John Russell was principal of the high school. This department was conducted upon the plan of an academy "with modern improvements in education; and admitting students without distinction of age or previous study."<sup>11</sup>

The first annual report said that there were about sixty scholars. "An unusually large proportion of the scholars have attended to writing, arithmetic, grammar, and geography. Five young gentlemen have mastered the difficulties of algebra, one of whom is now studying geometry. Three students are pursuing the study of Latin."<sup>12</sup>

Other denominations in this early period and, in fact, until after the Civil War, conducted religious-public schools of a similar nature. Three Methodist ministers, Wm. Beauchamp, Thomas Hinde, and Wm. McDowell, founded the town of Mt. Carmel in 1817 in order "to build a city on liberal and advantageous principles and to constitute funds for the establishment of seminaries of learning and for religious pur-

<sup>8</sup> Quart. Reg. Am. Ed. Soc., Nov., 1830, v. 4, p. 354.

<sup>9</sup> Quart. Reg. Am. Ed. Soc., Nov., 1830, v. 4, p. 354 and Ill Int., Mch. 24, 1827.

<sup>10</sup> Ill. Int., Mch. 24, 1827.

<sup>11</sup> Peck, Guide for Immigrants, p. 248.

<sup>12</sup> Illinois Intelligencer, May 16, 1829.



poses.”<sup>13</sup> The articles of association for the city of Mt. Carmel provided for the division of the town site into a number of lots, one-fourth of which were called “public donation lots \* \* \* appropriated to the use of schools and religious purposes.”<sup>14</sup> The money realized from the sale of the public donation lots constituted a fund from which one-third was to be used for a male academy, one-third for a female academy, and the remaining one-third for religious purposes. Accordingly, a school was opened by Beauchamp, in 1819, and a charter was granted by the legislature in 1825. Mt. Carmel was early a center of Methodist influence in the southern part of the state. Religious conferences were held in the town, out of which originated the movement which resulted in the founding of McKendreean College.\*

The New England influence was accentuated by the Congregational and Presbyterian preachers and missionaries from that district. “Mr. Wylie was the first Presbyterian clergyman, who settled permanently, in Illinois. This gentleman was at the head of the seminary of learning in Randolph county, as well as attending to his clerical duties.”<sup>15</sup>

Rev. J. M. Ellis went to Illinois about 1820, and recognizing the need for schools, he began to advocate a seminary. Money was raised and Ellis appealed to an eastern missionary society for help. This appeal fell into the hands of a member of the Yale class of 1828. Being interested in home missions, this graduate interested others of his class in the formation of the Illinois Association with the following pledge:

“Believing in the entire alienation of the heart from God, in the necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit for its renovation, and that these influences are not to be expected without the use of means; deeply impressed also with the destitute condition of the western section of our country, and the urgent claims of its inhabitants upon the benevolence of the East, and in view of the fearful crisis which is evidently approaching, and which we believe can only be averted by speedy and energetic measures on the part of the friends

<sup>13</sup> Boggess, *Settlement of Illinois*, p. 193, in *Chi. Hist. Soc. Col.*, v. 5.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

\* The early name of McKendree college.

<sup>15</sup> Reynolds, *My Own Times*, p. 199.



of religion and literature in the older state; and believing that evangelical religion and literature must go hand in hand to the successful accomplishment of this desired end, we, the undersigned, express our readiness to go to the state of Illinois for the purpose of establishing a seminary of learning such as shall be best adapted to the exigencies of that country, a part of us to engage in instruction in the seminary, the others, to occupy, as preachers, important stations in the surrounding country: provided the undertaking be decided practicable and the location approved: and provided also, the providence of God permits us to engage in it.

THERON BALDWIN,  
JOHN F. BROOKS,  
MASON GROSVENOR,  
ELISHA JENNEY,  
WILLIAM KIRBY,  
J. M. STURTEVANT,  
ASA TURNER,

Theological Department, Yale College, February 21, 1829.”<sup>16</sup>

One member of this group, Lemuel Foster, was sent as a missionary to Illinois. He drove overland with his bride and was ordained at Jacksonville, in 1832. He preached and his wife taught school in a log cabin. A little later, they had an academy with two school rooms on the first floor and a church above.

The founder of Monticello Seminary had distinctly a religious conception in mind. This is his account: “One morning, while lying in bed, somewhat indisposed, my wife came into the room, and as she went out, made some remark. One of our little children that had just begun to lisp a few words, caught the remark, and while playing by itself on the floor, repeated it over and over a great many times. This led me to reflect on the powerful effect of a mother’s example on the minds, manners, and habits of her off-spring, and no less powerful influence that females have over society at large. Hence the great necessity of their being qualified for those important and responsible situations, in this life, which God, in His infinite wisdom has assigned them \* \* \*. And being desirous to act the part of a faithful steward of what God

<sup>16</sup> Sturtevant, *Autobiography*, p. 139.

had placed in my possession, I resolved to devote so much of it as would erect a building, to be devoted to the moral, intellectual and domestic improvement of females, particularly those whose means were limited.”<sup>17</sup>

A religious motive impelled the founding of many of the academies and higher institutions of learning in Illinois up to the middle of the nineteenth century. The same spirit which sent missionaries and preachers from the older states to look after the religious welfare of the people on the frontier was prominent in the foresight for and care of the educational institutions. Thus the Yale movement was not only an educational conception but a religious undertaking as well. About the time, though, that the New England band went to Jacksonville, the abolitionists, headed by William Lloyd Garrison, were stirring the country into a bitter rage of sectionalism. Illinois was plunged into the strife of sectional hatred so that the New England group—from the home states which had produced and supported Garrison—were looked upon, at least, with suspicion. They sought to allay and assuage that feeling by cooperating with the older denominations in the state and by trying to find southern or western professors for some of the college departments.

Another obstacle, however, was encountered when the New England Presbyterian—Congregational denominations first tried to obtain a charter for Illinois College from the legislature which was still southern. The law makers were afraid of the sectarian influence which might result. Judge Hall put the case thus: “In several instances, acts of incorporation for seminaries of learning, and for religious associations, have been refused by the legislature; and one institution of learning has been incorporated, with an expressed provision, that no theological department shall ever be attached to it. This is another indication of public sentiment in this state, or at least of the policy of the legislature. There seems to be a great dread among law givers, of religious domination, and of sectarian influence. Bills for acts to incorporate religious societies, for the single purpose of enabling them to hold a few acres of ground for their meeting house and graveyard have been more than once intro-

---

<sup>17</sup> State Supt. Rept., 1867-8, p. 266.

duced and rejected. No college, or other institution of learning, in which any one religious sect is known to have a predominant influence, has ever yet received a charter in this state; nor will any such institution ever be incorporated there unless public sentiment shall undergo radical change.”<sup>18</sup>

Judge Hall then argued for the right and necessity of religious denominations instructing their children: “If religious denominations think proper to educate their own children in their own tenets, they have a clear right to do so. It is enough for those who object to the exertion of sectarian influence upon the young mind, to withhold their support from institutions which they disapprove. The granting of a charter to a literary institution, confers upon it no moral power, stamps no authority upon the tenets of the persons who control it, nor affects in the slightest degree, any of the rights of conscience. It merely gives to such an institution facilities for the transaction of its financial concerns, and for the safe-keeping of funds bestowed upon it by the benevolent, for public and beneficial purposes.”

“In a country, where religious opinions are perfectly unshackled, and men may believe and worship as they please, it seems to be unfair, that they should not be allowed every facility for educating their children according to the dictates of their own judgment; and we doubt, whether it is not a violation of the spirit at least, of our free institutions, to refuse to a religious society, the ordinary facilities of law, for the protection of its property, the management of its concerns, and the dissemination of its opinions. The truth is, that the best colleges in the United States are sectarian; each of them is under the direct patronage and influence of a religious sect. No college, from which such influence has been excluded, by expressed prohibition, has been successful. The reason of this seems to be that the business of education falls naturally into the hands of the clergy. It comes legitimately within the sphere of their duties. They are fitted for it by the nature of their studies and pursuits; while liberally educated men, in other professions, could only become qualified for the business of tuition

---

<sup>18</sup> Hall, *Sketches of the West*, 1835, v. 2, p. 206.

by the sacrifice of their other avocations. Those avocations are too lucrative and honorable to be abandoned by men of talents, for the humble and precarious calling of teacher or professor.”<sup>18</sup>

The new democracy, moreover, feared that there was on foot a plan to unite the church and state to establish an aristocratic clergy, and to destroy the liberties of the people. Consequently, when Alton, Illinois and McKendreean Colleges and several academies petitioned the legislature from 1830 to 1835, for articles of incorporation, charters were refused. The educational convention of common schools at Vandalia, in 1833, with numerous petitions by friends of the colleges and academies, caused the Committee on Petitions to make this report to the legislature: “In view of your committee, three questions here arise upon the settlement of which the whole matter will turn.”<sup>19</sup>

“1. Are institutions of this character really needed in this state?

2. Is it important to their success that the trustees who manage them should become bodies corporate?

3. Can corporate powers be granted with safety to the public interest?”<sup>20</sup>

With regard to the first question, the committee found that higher institutions were necessary to furnish teachers for the common schools. The latter are unable to exist without the former. Therefore, it should be the policy to charter academic institutions. The other argument, relative to the first question, stated that higher institutions were necessary to provide scientific men. They instanced such men as Sir Humphry Davy and Eli Whitney. “The engineer, for instance, upon whom we must depend, to survey, and at every step of their progress direct in the construction of our canals and railroads, must be acquainted with algebra, geometry, trigonometry, etc. \* \* \* . We must have institutions which shall be the depositories of science—liberally endowed—and furnished with apparatus, libraries, and able and learned men as instructors \* \* \* who shall write our school books

<sup>18</sup> Hall, *Sketches from the West*, 1835, v. 2, p. 206.

<sup>19</sup> Senate and House Reports, 1834-5, p. 337.

<sup>20</sup> Senate and House Reports, 1834-5, p. 337.



and histories, and become our authors of imperishable fame?"<sup>21</sup>

The argument relative to question two, is a legal discussion which does not concern us.

The Committee on Petitions adopted, in part, the memorial of the trustees of Illinois College, in the report to the legislature relative to question, three.

"We would state that it can be done without the least hazard to the interests of the community. One of the most distinguished jurists and civilians in our country, in an argument before the Supreme Court of the United States, has stated that the uniform testimony of experience, both in our own and other countries, is, that such literary corporations are, in an eminent degree, safe, and highly conducive to the public good, and that, as a uniform fact, they have not been perverted from their original purpose in improper ends. And so far as we know, no fact is recorded which proves the danger of any such perversion. Not only do facts prove the safety of such literary corporation, but the nature of the case also shows that they are exposed to fewer influences which may lead to perversion, than almost any other class of corporations. They depend almost entirely on public sentiment for their patronage and support, and therefore cannot, with impunity, disregard the known interests and wishes of the community. On the other hand, they are under the influence of every possible motive to regulate all their measures so as to bear the test of public scrutiny, and to correspond with the known expression of public will."<sup>21</sup>

The committee went on to say that these reasons were decisive; that literary corporations had been tried in other states and found safe, and "now, why should that which is so safe in these states be dangerous in Illinois?"

"If, then, as we trust has been abundantly shown, colleges are so much needed in our State, and the public interest would be as really injured by neglecting to foster them as by refusing to cherish common schools, and if corporate powers are so essential to their permanent prosperity and usefulness, and these powers can be granted with entire safety to the public interest, what course does sound policy

---

<sup>21</sup> Senate and House Reports, 1834-5, p. 337.



dictate? It would seem to be as clear as the sun in the heavens. Shall we hesitate to pursue it? By your own acts we have decided that it is inexpedient to create these institutions by legislative enactment, and endow them from the public resources. But are we prepared to say that none shall exist within our bounds, when they are the pride of surrounding states? Shall Illinois, with its unrivaled location, beauty, fertility and natural resources, which prepare it to stand preeminent in the confederacy, expose herself to the denunciations of all her sister states, by refusing to foster literary institution?"<sup>22</sup>

The educational committee expressed its attitude toward the petitioners for literary institutions by these questions. "Are not these different boards of trustees composed of our fellow citizens, and are they not worthy citizens? Have they done anything to forfeit public confidence? Have we evidence that any other associations could do the work better? Shall we single out any body of men, so long as they show themselves worthy of public confidence, and are engaged in promoting the public good, and deny them those powers and privileges which any association of our fellow citizens might justly ask at our hands? Why then, we repeat, not grant the prayer of these petitions? Shall they meet with a cold repulse? Shall their generous ardor in this noble work be thus suppressed? Are we ready to say to any body of our fellow citizens who have exhibited such a spirit of enterprise, and labored with so commendable a zeal, and met with so much success, we will not sustain you?"<sup>23</sup>

The committee said that the petitioners had these claims on the legislature for its support. "They commenced their operations in the infancy of our State, when the means of education were exceedingly limited, and the schools of every description were few and far between. They do not simply prepare to educate those who shall hereafter come upon the stage, but the present generation also. The cry now is from all parts of the State—educate the present generation. The petitioners are ready to vociferate the same loud and long. This is the very thing that they propose to aid in accomplish-

---

<sup>22</sup> Senate and House Reports, 1834-5, p. 337.

<sup>23</sup> Senate and House Reports, 1834-5, p. 337.

ing. They come to us and point to the present state of education in Illinois, and simply ask us to afford them such facilities as will enable them to prosecute this noble work without embarrassment. Shall we then withhold from them that countenance and support which they ask? It would seem that none could be more deserving of encouragement than the pioneers in the cause of education. In the opinion of your committee, the petitioners are richly entitled to the confidence of their fellow-citizens, and the support of ourselves as a legislature.”<sup>24</sup>

Thereupon, the legislature granted charters to Alton College, Illinois College, McKendreean College, Jonesborough College and the Jacksonville Female Academy, in 1835. The charters of these institutions are practically all the same. The model upon which they were made was the bill for a charter for Illinois College, which bill was prepared by the missionaries and their associates. The group was made up of Edward Beecher, Julian M. Sturtevant, Truman M. Post, Theron Baldwin, William Kirby, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Elisha Jenney, Asa Turner, Jonathan B. Turner, John F. Brooks, Samuel D. Lockwood and J. M. Ellis.

These men were the founders of Illinois College and the Female Academy at Jacksonville, in 1829 and 1830. The legislature was petitioned by these institutions for charters almost immediately. J. M. Sturtevant, in his sketch of Theron Baldwin, said that the latter's arguments for charters for these institutions, before the Senate Educational Commission, were so able that the committee adopted them as their own in reporting the bill favorably.

The assumption that the Jacksonville group of men were familiar with the charter of Yale College is probably true.

1. The Yale charter of 1701, amended in 1723, “provides that the number of said trustees be not under seven nor above Eleven.”<sup>25</sup> The Jacksonville charters named eleven trustees.

2. The objects stated in the two sets of charters are similar: “Wherein Youth may be instructed in the Arts and Sciences who through the blessing of Almighty God may be fitted for Publick employment in Church and Civil

<sup>24</sup> Senate and House Reports, 1834-5, p. 337.

<sup>25</sup> Yale Uni. Cat., 1913-14, p. 63.

State.”<sup>25</sup> The Jacksonville charters stated that the “object of said corporations shall be the promotion of the general interest of education, and to qualify young men to engage in the several employments and professions of society, and to discharge honorably and usefully the various duties of life.”<sup>26</sup>

3. The corporate powers of the Yale charter of 1745, said, “Thomas Clap, etc., shall be an Incorporate Society or Body Corporate and Politic and shall hereafter be called and known by the name of the President and Fellows of Yale College in New Haven, and that by the same name they and their Successors shall and may have perpetual Succession, and shall and may be Persons in the Law capable to plead and be impleaded, defend and be fended, and answer and be answered unto; and also to have, take, possess, acquire, purchase, or otherwise receive Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, Goods, Chattels, or other Estates \* \* \* to grant, demise, lease, use, manage or improve for the Good and benefit of the said college.”<sup>25</sup>

The corporate powers of Illinois College were: “To have perpetual succession, to make contracts, to sue, and be sued, implead and be impleaded, to grant and receive by its corporate name, and to do all the other acts as natural persons may; to accept, acquire, purchase or sell property, real, personal and mixed, in all lawful ways; to use, employ, manage, and dispose of all such property, and all money belonging to said corporation, in such manner as shall seem to the trustees best adapted to promote the objects of aforementioned.”<sup>27</sup>

4. The Yale corporation “shall and may hereafter have a common Seal \* \* \* and this same Seal to alter, break, and make new as they think fit.”<sup>28</sup> Illinois College was “to have a common seal, and to alter or change the same.”<sup>27</sup>

5. The Yale charter gave the trustees power “to make \* \* \* all such wholesome and reasonable Laws, Rules and Ordinances, not repugnant to the Laws of England, nor the Laws of this Colony.”<sup>28</sup> The Jacksonville charter gave the trustees power “to make such by-laws for its regulation

<sup>25</sup> Yale Univ. Cat., 1913-14, p. 63.

<sup>26</sup> Session Laws, 1835-45; Session Laws 1835, p. 177.

<sup>27</sup> Session Laws 1835-45; Session Laws 1835, p. 177.

<sup>28</sup> Yale Uni. Cat., 1913-14, p. 63.

as are not inconsistent with the constitution and the laws of the United States or this State.”<sup>27</sup>

6. The President in Yale College “shall have power to give and confer all such Honors, Degrees or Licenses as are usually given in Colleges or Universities, upon such as they shall think worthy thereof.”<sup>27</sup> The trustees of institutions granting degrees had the power “to confer on such persons as may be considered worthy, such academical or honorary degrees as are usually conferred by similar institutions.”<sup>27</sup>

7. The charter of 1701 provided that the trustees could “have, accept, acquire, purchase or otherwise lawfully enter any Lands, Tenements and Hereditaments to the use of School, not exceeding the value of five hundred Pounds per Ann.”<sup>29</sup> All literary charters granted in Illinois after 1830, limited the amount of property held. “The lands, tenements, hereditaments, to be held in perpetuity, in virtue of this act \* \* \* shall not exceed six hundred and forty acres.”<sup>30</sup>

8. The act of 1792 made lay members eligible to the board of trustees of Yale College. The purpose was probably to release, somewhat, the religious restrictions. The incorporators of many colleges and academies of Illinois tried to have a theological department established, but for a long time, that clause was kept out of the charters.

Finally, the general tone and spirit, as well as many of the provisions, in the Illinois charters were similar to those of Yale.

Religious denominations, consisting of Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists had missionaries in Illinois near the beginning of the nineteenth century. The purpose of the churches in sending missionary preachers to the West was educational as well as religious. Schools, usually academies, because they were the representative educational institutions of the period, were opened in the more populated localities, largely through the efforts of pioneer preachers. The culmination of the movement found expression in the establishment of Alton, McKendreean and Jacksonville Colleges, for the purpose of educating ministers, and giving others a liberal education. In the class struggle between the Yankee and the southerner, it was urged by the

<sup>27</sup> Yale Uni. Cat., 1913-14, p. 63.

<sup>30</sup> Session Laws, 1835-45; Session Laws 1835, p. 177.

latter that the former wanted to unite Church and State. The legislature, chiefly southern, in 1830, refused for three years to grant a charter to Illinois College. By the combination of the Congregationalists and Presbyterians, representing Illinois College, the Baptists, Alton, and the Methodists, McKendreean, charters were granted to these institutions. After that, academies were established by charters similar to the college charters, the latter resembling, closely somewhat the Yale charters of 1701 and 1745.

The foregoing chapters have dealt with external considerations; the following discussion is an examination of some of the internal features of the academy.



## CHAPTER V.

## SOME INTERNAL FEATURES.

*Entrance Requirements.*

Standardization in administrative organization, entrance requirements, tuition charges, subjects of study and methods of teaching, is a slow process even in relatively developed communities. Only a high degree of social action selects the ideal. On the contrary, frontier life provides in its educational system those features which suit the ideas, tastes or prejudices of extreme individualism. Consequently, the Illinois academies, individually, determined their own rules of procedure.

Age and mental attainment, the most common standards of admission in our present educational system, were used, but by no means generally, as entrance requirements to the academies in Illinois. Sex, no longer an exclusive requirement, as had been in the colonial Latin grammar school, was only an occasional condition of entrance. The academy, therefore, was the first institution to grant higher educational privileges to women. The statement that only a limited number of pupils could be accepted was probably more for the purpose of advertising an exclusive institution than as a condition for admission. Tuition payment, in practice, was probably the most rigid of any of the entrance rules.

In general, anyone who paid the tuition charges, was admitted as a member of an academy. Some statements made by academic managers in newspapers and directories throw light on the entrance requirements: In 1830, there was a female department, attached to the Vandalia high school, under a young lady, "who teaches girls of any age, and boys under six."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, "pupils may be entered at any time, and will be charged only for the time of entering to the end

<sup>1</sup> Int., Oct. 23, 1830.

of the quarter in session.”<sup>2</sup> Again, “children of every age are admitted, from those in the alphabet, and upwards through the whole circle of sciences, so far as they are taught in any academy.”<sup>3</sup> In the Hillsboro Academy, “the admission of pupils is restricted to no limitation of age or attainment.”<sup>4</sup> The Edgar County Academy said, “Pupils of both sexes and all ages are admitted.”<sup>5</sup> In the School for Young Ladies, in Springfield, the unique statement was made that “none will be received under six years of age, unless they are already members of the school or have a place engaged in it.”<sup>6</sup> The Canton Academy accepted, “youth of both sexes, not only as being convenient, but because it is believed that under proper regulations, they will exert a happy influence, in correcting the morals and refining the manners of each other.”<sup>7</sup> The Academy and Common School of Chicago admitted, in evening classes, “young men who are obliged to pursue some other occupation during the day.”<sup>8</sup> Finally, some academies had room for only a limited number of students. When that number was reached, no others were admitted.<sup>9</sup>

From these excerpts, it should be noticed, that no standard of scholarship was required as a condition of entrance.

#### *Tuition.*

One ideal of democracy was to provide education in the chartered academies which should be free to all, the ones able to pay, as well as the ones unable to pay. In particular, the charters of Madison, Washington and Belleville academies carried a provision for the free education of youth when the funds of the institutions would admit that practice. Unfortunately, in the minds of the managers, the funds were never sufficient. Whether the academies were endowed in money or in land, or whether they received their share of the distributive school fund for maintaining a common school, fees were always charged. Dues were placed on instruction,

<sup>2</sup> Sang. Jr., June 5, 1845.

<sup>3</sup> Peoria Directory, 1844, p. 102.

<sup>4</sup> Sang. Jr., May 13, 1842.

<sup>5</sup> Fr. Farm, v. 8, p. 71.

<sup>6</sup> Sang. Jr., Apr. 4, 1835.

<sup>7</sup> Sang. Jr., May 21, 1836.

<sup>8</sup> Ec. Jr., Ed., Nov. 15, 1851.

<sup>9</sup> Sang. Jr., Nov. 7, 1835.

sometimes by subjects, sometimes by departments, sometimes by what we may call a curricula basis, and sometimes a fixed amount for all work alike. The biggest fee, however, was charged for living accommodations. If academies drew pupils from regions other than the immediate locality, room, board and washing were necessary because transportation facilities were poor, roads were bad, streams had to be forded and dangerous forests crossed. Inaccessibility combined with charges for instruction made the academy a select institution, in practice, rather than a means by which the mass of the children could be educated.

Tuition was almost as varied as the academies were numerous. However, several classifications of the ways in which it was charged follow:

1. Tuition was placed on subjects:

	Per quarter.
Grammar .....	\$ 4.00
Advanced English .....	5.00
Higher branches .....	6.00
Piano .....	8.50
Piano and singing.....	12.00
Reading .....	2.50
Writing, reading, arithmetic.....	3.00
Geometry .....	3.50
Geography .....	3.50
Higher mathematics .....	4.00
Latin, French, Greek.....	4.00 <sup>10</sup>

2. Tuition was charged by departments:

	Per quarter.
Preparatory department.....	\$ 5.50
Junior department .....	8.50
Second Junior department .....	10.50
Senior department .....	12.50
Male department .....	Higher than
Female department .....	for females <sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Sang. Jr., May 29, 1840.  
Int. Oct. 23, 1830.

<sup>11</sup> Sang. Jr., Sept. 25, 1835.  
Int. Oct. 23, 1830.

3. Tuition was charged on what might be called a curriculum basis:

	Per session
Common branches .....	\$ 2.50 <sup>12</sup>
Higher branches .....	In proportion <sup>12</sup>
Philosophy, history, arithmetic, geography, grammar, reading, spelling.....	2.50 <sup>13</sup>
Reading, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, penmanship, bookkeeping, and other ordinary branches of English education....	6.00 <sup>14</sup>
History, moral and natural philosophy, astronomy, rhetoric, composition, declamation, chemistry, botany, algebra, and the higher branches of mathematics, Latin, Greek, French, Belles Lettres, ornamental needlework, drawing, painting, vocal and instrumental music .....	10.00 <sup>14</sup>

Canton Academy had a similar curriculum tuition:

	Per quarter.
Orthography, reading, writing .....	\$ 2.50
English grammar, mental and written arithmetic, English composition, ancient and modern geography, the use of maps and globes, and history.....	3.00
Algebra, geometry, bookkeeping, natural philosophy, surveying, chemistry, intellectual and moral philosophy, political economy, astronomy, natural theology, and the Latin and Greek classics.....	4.00 <sup>15</sup>

In the Springfield city schools, tuition was as follows:

	Per quarter.
Spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, English grammar, and composition..	\$ 2.00
History of the United States, general history, chemistry, and natural philosophy.....	3.00
Geometry, algebra, and the intellectual and moral sciences .....	4.00

<sup>12</sup> Sang. Jr., Jan. 10, 1835.

<sup>13</sup> Peoria Directory, 1844, p. 102.

<sup>14</sup> Sang. Jr., Oct. 21, 1837.

<sup>15</sup> Sang. Jr., May 21, 1836.

“The school fund will not be deducted from the above prices.”<sup>16</sup>

4. Tuition charges, many times, were stated as being a certain amount for any or all subjects. In the Springfield Academy, it was \$7.50 per session, payable in advance.<sup>17</sup> In the Springfield High School, the terms were \$200 per annum, \$50 payable at the commencement of each session. Day scholars paid \$55, half of which was payable in advance.<sup>18</sup> Illinois College Academy made a single tuition charge of \$20.<sup>19</sup>

Often tuition charges included several items of expense. Tremont Academy required \$95 per year, which included tuition, board and washing.<sup>20</sup> In Monticello Female Academy, “the expenses will be for the Summer Term of sixteen weeks, for board, tuition, and incidental expenses, \$44, of which \$25 will be required in advance.”<sup>21</sup> St. Mary’s, in Chicago, charged for board and tuition, \$150 per annum, and \$75 for half boarders, both of which were payable half-yearly in advance.<sup>22</sup>

Frequently, board was particularly mentioned. “Good accommodations for boarding can be obtained in respectable families at reasonable prices.”<sup>23</sup> The principal can accommodate six or eight pupils with board and lodging, price two dollars a week.”<sup>24</sup> “Boarding can be had convenient and cheap in the neighborhood for males. I will receive at my house, the females, exclusively, at one dollar per week, if paid in advance or at the commencement of the session, or one dollar and twenty-five cents at the close of the session.”<sup>25</sup> “Board may be had in the village, at from \$1.50 to \$2 per week.”<sup>26</sup> The Belleville trustees said, “boarding in the best houses in town may be had at \$50 per annum. In the country, very convenient to town, boarding may be considerably

<sup>16</sup> Sang. Jr., June 5, 1845.

<sup>17</sup> Sang. Jr., Oct. 9, 1840.

<sup>18</sup> Sang. Jr., Oct. 21, 1837.

<sup>19</sup> Ill. Col. Cat., 1851-2.

<sup>20</sup> Sang. Jr., Apr. 17, 1840.

<sup>21</sup> Sang. Jr., Mch. 28, 1844.

<sup>22</sup> Ec. Jr. Ed., Nov. 15, 1851.

<sup>23</sup> Sang. Jr., Oct. 21, 1837.

<sup>24</sup> Peoria Dir., 1844, p. 102.

<sup>25</sup> Sang. Jr., Jan. 10, 1835.

<sup>26</sup> Sang. Jr., May 21, 1836.



lower.”<sup>27</sup> In Hillsboro, “good board may be had in respectable families from \$1.50 to \$2 per week.”<sup>28</sup>

Board sometimes carried with it room also. In the Monticello Female Academy, “the teacher and pupils will board in his family (his residence is within a few rods of the building), the pupils will be under the immediate domestic care of Mrs. Corey (wife of the principal of the Preparatory Department), and receive every attention requisite to the health, morals and manners. They will also be constantly under the eye of the teacher, not only in the school room, but in the boarding house, whose influence will be united with that of Mr. and Mrs. Corey in controlling and regulating their habits.”<sup>29</sup>

Also, “bedding, except a bedstead and straw mattress, is to be furnished by the young ladies themselves, who will be taught and required to take care of their room.”<sup>29</sup> The advertisement of the Springfield High School stated that “the pupils from abroad will be received in the family of the principals, where they will meet with kindness, and receive those material attentions so necessary to youth in the absence of parents. Pupils are expected to furnish their own beds and bedding (bedsteads excepted) and to have their clothing distinctly and permanently marked.”<sup>30</sup>

Tuition charges were made occasionally for curious things. “Every student is charged for stationery, fuel, sweeping, etc.—one dollar in the winter and fifty cents in the summer time.”<sup>31</sup> “Each scholar attending the school may furnish—cords of wood for which he or she shall be credited—dollars per cord.”<sup>32</sup>

Illinois College catalogue, 1851, made the following statement for the annual academic expenses exclusive of vacation:

Tuition .....	\$20.00	Wood .....	\$ 2.50
Room rent .....	10.00	Board and washing,	
Ordinary repairs,	2.50	average .....	60.00
Library .....	2.50	Board, per week, 50c to	1.50

<sup>27</sup> Spectator, Feb. 1, 1825.

<sup>28</sup> Sang. Jr., May 13, 1842.

<sup>29</sup> Sang. Jr., Mch. 28, 1844.

<sup>30</sup> Sang. Jr., Oct. 21, 1837.

<sup>31</sup> Sang. Jr., May 29, 1840.

<sup>32</sup> Pr. Fr., 1846, p. 53.

The Peoria Academy accepted many things for tuition. It made this statement relative to charges: "Terms of tuition, for twelve weeks, \$4. If a pupil is under ten years, and pays in advance, \$3. Almost any kind of property is received for tuition at a reasonable price, provided arrangements be made at the commencement of the quarter, and payment be made at the time and in the manner proposed. But if no arrangements be made, or if payment be delayed till after the expiration of the quarter, cash will be expected. A careful account is kept of all school funds received, and the same is accredited to the parents or guardian of the children."<sup>33</sup>

Sometimes minute directions were given for the student's welfare. "Students coming from a distance, should have guardians appointed either in this city, or in New York, Detroit, St. Louis, or Galena, who will be responsible for the regular payment of bills when due. Board and tuition per annum. \$150, payable half-yearly in advance. Washing, mending, and attendance in sickness, are extra charges. Washing, per annum, \$18. Mending, .... Doctor's fees, \$3. Medicine will be charged at druggists' prices."

"German, Spanish and Italian languages, each \$15 per annum. Books, stationery, etc., will be furnished at the current prices, or may be procured by parents or guardians. Each student must be provided with two summer and two winter suits. He should also have, at least, six shirts, six pairs of stockings, six towels, six pocket handkerchiefs, three pairs of shoes or boots, a hat, a cloak or overcoat, a silver spoon, and a silver drinking cup—all marked with his name."

"No advance will be made by the institution for articles of clothing except the amount expected to be thus expended is previously deposited with the treasurer. Pocket money should also be deposited in the hands of the treasurer to be given to the students as prudence may suggest."<sup>34</sup>

### *The School Year.*

There was no fixed school year, as we now know it, from September to June. School started when, and lasted as long as the individual directors saw fit. "There are two sessions

<sup>33</sup> Peoria Dir., 1844, p. 102.

<sup>34</sup> Ill. Reg., 1847, p. 20.

in a year, of twenty-four weeks each: the one to commence the first Monday in January, the other the first Monday in July. The schools are kept six hours or more each day for five days a week."<sup>35</sup> In Canton Academy, "the first term will commence on the third Monday of April."<sup>36</sup> An English school in Springfield began its first quarter March 13th.<sup>37</sup> Peoria Institute had "four terms, of eleven weeks each, with a six weeks' vacation. The next term commenced the first Monday in May, 1851."<sup>38</sup> The Young Ladies School at Springfield began "the first term of the second year \* \* \* April 13th."<sup>39</sup> The Springfield Academy had sessions of twenty weeks. The first session "will commence the 15th of November, instant."<sup>40</sup>

### *Subjects of Study.*

Previous to the beginning of the nineteenth century, Latin, Greek and Arithmetic were the only subjects required for admission to college. Geography was added in 1807, by some of the eastern colleges, English grammar in 1819, algebra in 1820, geometry in 1844, and ancient history in 1847.<sup>41</sup> The Latin grammar schools had served distinctly as college preparatory institutions, while the academies continued to enrich their subjects of study by adding material from the college field or by taking subjects outside of it. English, history, science, and modern languages for the first time became significant. English composition and declamation, not unlike the present high school aim in these subjects, emphasized the development of correct usage in speech and writing, as well as the enjoyment of the masterpieces of the language. History received an ever-increasing emphasis because of the desire to praise and perpetuate free institutions. Physical geography, physics, chemistry, botany and astronomy were becoming popular for the first time, because of their speculative rather than their utilitarian value. The useful subjects were continually mentioned and taught. The academy, therefore, while serving the college, was an institution with other objects in view.

<sup>35</sup> Peoria Dir., 1844, p. 102.

<sup>36</sup> Sang. Jr., May 21, 1836.

<sup>37</sup> Sang. Jr., Mch. 25, 1837.

<sup>38</sup> Peoria Dir., 1850, p. 155.

<sup>39</sup> Sang. Jr., April 4, 1835.

<sup>40</sup> Sang. Jr., Nov. 7, 1835.

<sup>41</sup> Brown, Making of Our Middle Schools, p. 231.

The academies and seminaries offered at least five distinct curricula. But some academies emphasized one curriculum, perhaps, more than another.

1. In the preparatory department of Monticello Academy, "it is designed that this Department shall be equal in every respect to the best female academies in the country. With the facilities which the seminary can furnish in obtaining teachers of known qualifications \* \* \* it is believed that it will not be difficult to carry out the design. Those who intend to pursue the higher branches in the seminary, will find it greatly to their advantage to attend this school, as books, course of study, and mode of teaching will be specially adapted to preparing them to enter favorably on the seminary course \* \* \* The trustees have erected a commodious building on the seminary grounds, in which they intend to open a Preparatory school, for the benefit of Misses, under 14 years of age, and those who are not otherwise qualified to enter the seminary."<sup>42</sup>

Farmington Academy stated that it had Latin and Greek, with other courses, as were necessary "to enter the higher classes in the colleges of the state."<sup>43</sup> Illinois College Academy outlined in its early catalogues courses which were intended for college entrance. The college authorities consoled the public with the statement that, if the pupils did not go to college, they were prepared anyway for life.<sup>44</sup>

2. Very early, it was recognized that one function of education was to prepare men for the ministry. The theological department of Rock Spring Seminary was founded on that assumption. "The general plan of study is accommodated to the circumstances of the preacher of the gospel \* \* \*. Ministers, who have families, and those who are somewhat advanced in life, may attend the institution, as may suit their convenience \* \* \*. As soon as circumstances will allow, a regular classical and theological education will be pursued."<sup>45</sup> Even some of the academies, such as the Cherry Grove Academy, had a provision in the charter which stated that one object was to afford facilities for the education of

<sup>42</sup> Sang. Jr., Mch. 28, 1844.

<sup>43</sup> Sang. Jr., May 1, 1839.

<sup>44</sup> Ill. Col. Cat., 1849.

<sup>45</sup> Am. Ed. Soc., Nov. 1830.



candidates for the ministry of the Cumberland Presbyterian church.<sup>46</sup>

3. The academy was regarded as the training school of the common school teacher. The Springfield High School had "a department attached for the instruction of teachers."<sup>47</sup> The Chicago Female Seminary said, "A teachers' department is connected with the Seminary."<sup>48</sup> Hillsboro Academy advertised that "special attention was paid to those wishing to qualify themselves to become teachers of the common schools of the state."<sup>49</sup> Another institution pointed out that "one feature of the school is worthy of notice. Particular attention is given to that kind of instruction calculated to prepare the student for the practical business of teaching."<sup>50</sup>

4. Nothing is specifically stated in the charters, constitutions, or advertisements of the academies that they prepared men for law and medicine, as well as for teaching or college, but often, the object of the institution was such that it intended to train leaders for the state and society. Among the professions of that day, the ministry was the only one that could most justly claim the name. But the lawyer and the doctor often studied the languages and social sciences in the academies before "reading" law or medicine.

5. Although a great deal was said about the practical pursuits of society, democracy had not yet been worked out. It was only in the process of formation. The academies were essentially themselves "class" schools, and were denominated, many times "select" institutions. Following through the advertisements in the newspapers, one can read between the lines that an appeal was being made to the cultured. From that class, usually, the academy received its support in donations and tuition. Hence, those subjects were taught for which there was a demand. Some pupils were incapable and unable to travel the rocky road of Hebrew, Greek, Latin, mathematics and philosophy. The object of this institution was to give young ladies a practical education \* \* \* and to "cultivate the manners and form correct habits."<sup>51</sup> In the

<sup>46</sup> Sess. Laws, 1844-45.

<sup>47</sup> Sang. Jr., Oct. 21, 1837.

<sup>48</sup> Chi. Dir., 1843, p. 13.

<sup>49</sup> Sang. Jr., May 13, 1842.

<sup>50</sup> Ec. Jr. Ed., Nov. 15, 1851.

<sup>51</sup> Chi. Dir., 1843, p. 13.



New Girls School, piano, guitar, ornamental needlework, English, French and Spanish were the subjects of study. Another advertised drawing, painting, vocal music, instrumental music, piano, guitar and organ, as subjects of study.<sup>52</sup>

At this point, a classification of the subjects taught in the academies will be made. Again, it is necessary to state that no academy taught all the subjects in the list, but that most of them taught the languages and the common branches.

1. Common branches: The Alphabet, Reading, Orthography, Penmanship, English Grammar, Composition, Declamation, Arithmetic, Bookkeeping, and Geography.

2. Languages: (a) Latin—Grammar, Caesar, Sallust, Cicero, Virgil, Horace and Tacitus. (b) Grammar—fables, exercises, New Testament, and classics. (c) Hebrew—grammar, exercises and Old Testament. (d) French—grammar, fables, and classics. (e) Spanish—grammar, classics. (f) Italian is mentioned once. It may have been Latin.

3. Sciences: Geography—ancient and modern, physical and celestial; Chemistry, Astronomy, Natural Philosophy, Botany, Mineralogy, Geology, Physiology, Hygiene, Medicine and Natural Science.

4. Mathematics: Arithmetic—higher, written and mental; Algebra, Trigonometry—plane and spherical; Geometry, Mensuration, Surveying, and Navigation.

5. Philosophy: Ethics, Logic and Intellectual Philosophy.

6. Social Sciences: History—English, United States, Greek, Rome, French, General; Mythology and Economics.

7. Religion: Pentateuch, Harmony of the Gospels, Evidences of Christianity, Natural Theology, and Christian Theology.

8. English: Grammar, Rhetoric, Belles Lettres, Elocution, English Literature, Poetry and Criticism.

9. Accomplishments: Drawing, Painting, Mezzotinto Painting, Vocal and Instrumental Music, Piano, Guitar, Organ and Ornamental Needlework.

10. Manual Labor.

To make the above classification applicable, the program of studies of the Springfield High School and the Springfield

<sup>52</sup> Sang. Jr., Oct. 20, 1838.  
State Supt. Report, 1867-8, p. 270.

Academy are next quoted: "The Departments of study will be six:

*First*—The English, including Orthography, Reading, Penmanship, Arithmetic, Bookkeeping, Geography, History, English Grammar, Composition and Elocution.

*Second*—The Latin and Greek Languages.

*Third*—Mathematics, including Algebra, Geometry, Plane and Spherical Trigonometry, Mensuration, Surveying and Navigation.

*Fourth*—The French and Spanish Languages.

*Fifth*—Natural Science, including Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Chemistry, Botany, Mineralogy and Geology.

*Sixth*—Moral and Intellectual Philosophy, Rhetoric and Criticism.<sup>53</sup>

The Springfield Academy advertised this course of study:

English—Reading, Orthography, Penmanship, Grammar, Murray's Composition, Declamation, Olney's Ancient Geography, Woodbridges' and Willards' Geography, History, Rhetoric, Astronomy, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry and Bookkeeping.

Classical—Latin Grammar—Liber Primmer, Jacob's Latin Reader, Caesar, Sallust, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Tacitus. Greek Grammar, Greek Exercises, Greek Reader and the New Testament.

Mathematical—Arithmetic, Algebra, Plane Trigonometry, Mensuration, Surveying, and Navigation.

French—Grammar, Fables, Telemaque, L'Histoire de Charles XII.

"The course of study has been selected with particular reference to the formation of practical as well as theoretical scholars, and proceeds on the settled conviction that thorough scholarship will be the result. And in the prosecution of it the pupils will be required by regular recitations and frequent examinations to develop a critical and particular knowledge of the several studies they may pursue; and so far as may be show their practical utility."<sup>54</sup>

The languages held the center of the circle of studies in all of the instruction in the academies before 1830, and much of it after that time. Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, a knowledge

<sup>53</sup> Sang. Jr., Oct. 21, 1837.

<sup>54</sup> Sang. Jr., Nov. 7, 1835.

of which was the mark of culture, persisted in American education for a long time and came from the old Latin Grammar School; but the academy brought into existence, as fringes at first, subjects of study that were practical at the time. A great amount of space and time was spent in advertising the utilitarian program of studies by the proprietors of the academies. But the owners, many times, preachers, had received the Latin Grammar type of education. It was but natural for them to project the ancient languages as the core of academic subject matter.

More than Latin was needed in a new country. An objection to languages, written in 1831, showed the trend away from the domination and influences of the Latin Grammar School. "The study of languages, when it is made the commencement or even the prominent part of a course of education, exercises no faculty but that of memory. If we are told that the books that are used in teaching the dead languages are full of wisdom and poetry, full of original thought, and rich conception, I answer that these are valueless, and vapid, and pernicious, to the mind that cannot estimate their real worth. The ancient classics are full of illustrations drawn from the great volume of nature. Those words are all confined, to the highest and most imaginative department of human thought—to history, poetry, eloquence and philosophy—subjects requiring the most abstract reflection, the most mature judgment, the most cultivated taste; and it is just as ridiculous to carry the mind of a child by a sudden transition from the works of Peter Parley to those of Virgil, Demosthenes, and Homer, as it would be to elevate the same child by a single step from the nursery to the senate."<sup>55</sup>

The same writer then gave several reasons why science should be introduced as a subject of study. First, science has been and is free from local, religious, and political squabbles. Second, science teaches individuals to deliberate rather than memorize. Third, science has an inestimable social value. Fourth, language made the schools venerate the past. Language consists of written records, books are necessary, strenuous effort is demanded, but science can be seen on every hand. It affords pleasure and interest and disciplines

---

<sup>55</sup> Hall, Ill., Mont. Mag., 1831, p. 316.

the mind. Fifth, language gives words without any meaning which is intellectual dyspepsia, but science furnishes the mind with real ideas. Sixth, through science alone, can the proper development of the country take place. Witness the silly arguments against the Illinois-Michigan Canal, which were, that the water from the lake would wash all the state away were an outlet once made.

In the words of Judge Hall, the necessity for teaching natural sciences was that "these efforts ought not be limited to knowledge of any one kind. All that can aid man, in gaining the highest point of mental elevation, is desirable. In a republican country, whose institutions are continually tending to democracy; where every change and revolution tends to obliterate unnecessary distinctions, to distribute power among the great mass of the community, and to mingle the elements of society together, it is especially necessary that the views of all our citizens should be enlarged and well balanced. But particularly ought those departments of science to be cultivated, which are best adapted for general diffusion, which correspond with the genius of our free institutions, and are calculated to develop the resources and increase the strength of the country."<sup>56</sup>

Of the sciences to be taught, "the natural sciences, or those derived from accurate examination of the laws and properties of the material world, hold a conspicuous place, and it is the object of this article to recommend a more general cultivation of this department of knowledge."<sup>57</sup> Astronomy, botany, chemistry, mineralogy and geology were recommended and defined as subjects that should have a place in academic instruction.

These subjects had not been introduced because there had been no demand for science. The leaders of education should know what science had revealed. "Commencing at the time when the frail bark crept timidly along the shore, and all the maritime enterprises were confined to the margin of the sea, he arrives at the period when the invention of the mariner's compass enabled the bold navigator to venture fearlessly upon the broad ocean, and visit distant lands, until then unknown to the civilized world. He sees the rude bark swelling

<sup>56</sup> Hall, Ill., Mont. Mag., 1831, p. 316.

<sup>57</sup> Hall, Ill. Mont. Mag., 1831, p. 316.



into the majestic ship, armed with the powerful engines of war, manned with hundreds of human beings, freighted with rich products of foreign climates. He beholds here, how the most simple contrivances, resulting from an accurate study of nature, and an ingenious combination of mechanic powers, have affected the intercourse of the world, advanced the progress of civilization, increased the comforts, and stimulated the industry of life. He has also carried his investigations below the surface of the deep, and examined the structure and modes of existence of myriads of animals who live secluded from the human eye. He has traced the mighty Leviathan to the profound caverns of the deep, and has watched the changing colours of the expiring dolphin; and if he has not seen the lovely Mermaid singing on the rock, or the car of Neptune rolling among the billows, he has discovered forms as beautiful, and combinations as wonderful in fact as those that are imagined in fable. He has inspected the curious shell, the rich coral, the priceless pearl; by the aid of science he has discovered beneath the waters a world as splendid and as beautiful as the earth itself.’<sup>58</sup>

“And lastly, the sciences are important from their direct influence upon the practical duties of life. In all discussions of a system of public instruction, it is to be recollected that we are a republican people, that we are the sovereign rulers of a mighty empire, that our children are the heirs apparent of the supreme political power, and that the lovely forms by which we are surrounded, are the mothers, the sisters and the daughters of patriots, and republican rulers. There is no useful art which does not depend for its success upon the principles of these sciences. Every culinary process involves the chemical operation, every mechanic art is founded upon the laws of natural philosophy—even agriculture, the great business which sustains the majority of our people, the most primitive and simple of all arts, cannot be conducted with advantage without some knowledge of this kind, and has been greatly indebted to the whole circle of natural sciences. But especially ought we cultivate everything which may tend to give simplicity, energy and manliness to individual character, and to cherish industry, economy, and enterprise as national

---

<sup>58</sup> Hall, *Ill. Mo. Mag.*, v. 1, p. 316.



virtues. In this country, no man is respected for mere accomplishments, no man can become distinguished by mere scholastic learning. But a still further effort is needed; and the friends of the diffusion of knowledge should never cease their exertions until the word usefulness has been inscribed in legible characters upon every literary institution of the country, and until a prominent place shall be given to the development of physical truth in every system of instruction.”<sup>59</sup>

### *Examinations.*

Another of the few sources that showed the internal workings of the academies was the system of examinations held and the addresses given at the end of the term. A committee, appointed by the board of trustees or the proprietors of the academies to examine the instruction, usually consisted of ministers. The pupils performed for the examiners in special exercises, prepared for the occasion, in the presence of parents and friends, of which the following is a typical description:

“And first in order, the examination of the school comes; and here permit me to say that if they acquitted themselves on the last examination in a masterly manner, in answering too low, on this—they ran to the opposite end of the magnet in speaking too loud, tried by their previous standard. Notwithstanding the crowding and the excessive heat of the day, which brought into play a brilliant array of fans, every scholar could be heard with distinctness by those within; and in a few instances, those out of doors could hear quite plainly. We saw sufficient to be satisfied that many of them acquitted themselves with credit and promptness and apparent thoroughness; we say apparent, because it is a glorious fact in many instances with teachers, that a studied effort is made for weeks for this occasion on particular points, rules and illustrations, to make a class shine well before an audience.”

“The reading of the *Intelligencer*, a manuscript paper published by the young gentlemen of the school, occupied one hour. An article on the origin of steam boats came, which abounded in all kinds of styles save an original one; historical essays, if sententious, should be so linked as to blend the in-

<sup>59</sup> Hall, Ill. Mo. Mag., v. 1, p. 316.

structive with the interesting. John Bull and Uncle Sam showed that the writer flourished a nervous quill, and sometimes became so nervous as to lose sight of the truth. He ought to hear Dr. Vinton lecture on exaggeration, and after that, compose in lucid intervals. A dream started amid glorious constellations on its dreamland mission. 'Ye stars, how he did soar.' School days brought to many a mind the happy hours of youth. 'Prayer' lacked unity. 'The Bible' was the most logical piece read and showed a disciplined mind. 'The identity philosophy' was touched on lightly, and the theory carried out very well. The mystic Swedenborg could not have taken a plainer position as far as the writer went out. Man was adapted to infinity and nature repeated him in all conditions of animal and vegetable life. It was the doctrine of Plato in new dress, and furnished for the occasion, but we sincerely believe the author was ignorant of the ground we walked across."

"The Paine and Voltaire school received a withering rebuke. 'Looking for Items,' was a brief editorial about the world in miniature. 'Our Paper,' published by the young ladies, occupied thirty minutes. It was read in a very low tone, and several pieces could not be heard at all; not even the subject was announced audible. This was bad, it ought not to be so loud, but readers should be selected for public reading."

"'Our School Days,' 'Mourners.' 'Books,' 'Home,' 'Mischiefmakers,' 'Words,' were brief but good. 'Twilight Thoughts' was stolen goods and publicly appropriated. 'Close of School' was a very touching piece. We think, without giving a prejudiced opinion, that the young gentlemen's paper was the best. The young ladies will try again before they deserve the palm of honor."<sup>60</sup>

Besides this kind of examination, the committee of examiners heard classes and individuals recite Latin grammar, Latin translation, mathematics, philosophy, and other ordinary subjects of study. Their judgment of the school was based on the ability of the pupils to recite from memory formal exercises.

But the public examinations were justified by the academy because, (a) the community had its interest awakened

<sup>60</sup> Sang. Jr., July 2, 1858.

in schools and education; (b) pupils were stimulated to better scholarship; (c) studies were reviewed when necessary. A writer in the *Illinois Teacher* stated the current conception thus: "But public examinations have great advantage attending them. They awaken a more general interest in the community at large on the subject of schools and education. They furnish an occasion for many good things to be said in the presence of parent and pupil. They stimulate the scholar to greater exertion and more accurate scholarship. Furthermore, these public examinations have generally been made the occasion to review the studies pursued by the pupils during the year. Nothing can be more useful than this. Reviewing studies carefully is the best way to make them thoroughly understood. It is true this can be done without any such public examination; but it will be more likely to be done, and better done, with it."<sup>61</sup>

The public examination was an occasion, moreover, for an address by the principal to the parents and the pupils on the worth of education. Occasionally, the virtues of learning were stated in very modern terms:

1. Education had a commercial value: "If there were no other considerations to prompt you to a faithful improvement of your privileges and time, the results in your favor, in dollars and cents, should be considered sufficient to spring and keep alive all of your energies, to prepare, for your entrance upon the business transactions of life, by obtaining the necessary literary qualifications."<sup>62</sup>

2. Mental satisfaction justified the efforts required to obtain an education: "Mental satisfaction alone may be considered infinitely more forcible, and contains enough in it to warrant all your efforts. The mind in an entire uncultivated state can have but few enjoyments, but when enlightened, vast fields of pleasure open before it. Truth is its proper element, and as the various order of beings derive most of enjoyment in the element suited to their natures, so the mind has most of enjoyment when in the possession or pursuits of truth."

"To separate truth and error—to detect the rock on which your bark of fortune might split—to be satisfied that

<sup>61</sup> *Illinois Teacher*, v. 1, p. 83.

<sup>62</sup> Trotter, W. D., *Prin. Salem Acad. in San. Jr.*, 1858.

your business, when transacted, is done correctly—to know what man is, and what he has done on earth—to become acquainted with the physical structure of the globe on which he dwells—the different orders of being which live and move through its expanse of waters, or inhabit appropriate divisions on its surface, and to discover the harmony of all nature's operations, as well as her wonderful power to accomplish the beneficent purposes of the Great Creator, in contributing to the preservation and happiness of all animal existence—are some of the few purposes of mental enjoyment.<sup>163</sup>

3. The foundation of a republican government rested upon education, but enough has been said already on that subject.

4. Social relationships required educated leaders: "But in the cultivation of the mind, materials are gathered from social intercourse with our fellow creatures; and as society is delightful and necessary to us all, there is an obligation resting upon every youth, apart from numerous inducements to carry with him into the world a large stock of information as he can command \* \* \*. Young Gentlemen! Who of you will step forward and add your name to the list of benefactors of the human race? Do you emulate the fame of the truly great? This is the way. Do you aspire to leave a trace upon the earth, which the touch of time will not mar, an expanding field for effort, not for ourselves alone, but to bring good mentally, socially, politically and religiously to others."

This chapter has shown that the standards for admission to academies in Illinois were singly and individually determined; that tuition fees were charged in all conceivable ways by subjects, by departments, by curricula, and by fixed sums for all subjects; that other items of cost were included in pupil's expenses, chief of which were those for living accommodations; that tuition charges, coupled with inaccessibility, made the academy practically a select institution open only to those who could afford it.

Moreover, the length of the school year, the division of the year, and the length of the school day were in no sense

---

<sup>163</sup> Trotter, W. D., *Prin. Salem Acad. in San Jr.*, 1858.

uniform throughout the state. However, nearly every academy did retain the Latin grammar school curriculum as a center around which other subjects were added to prepare students for the useful and professional positions in life. Besides the ancient languages, philosophy and arithmetic, modern languages, more mathematical subjects, some social sciences, natural and physical sciences, cultural and artistic subjects, and manual labor were introduced into the academic program. Formal examinations were conducted by a committee of the prominent men of the community, usually ministers, at the close of each term in order to pass judgment upon the efficiency of instruction. Once in a while, the mode of teaching was such as to indicate to the pupil some of the social values of education. The utilitarian aspect of the academy is well explained by the philosophy underlying the manual labor feature.



## CHAPTER VI.

---

*The Manual Labor Aspect.*

To the professions, the Latin grammar school and the early academy had ministered, but the great mass of the common children in frontier and semi frontier districts were unable to rise from their common station in life if education were the prerequisite. Although the academy may be said to have represented liberalism, and although it was a frontier institution, it was essentially, highly selective. The middle and upper classes, only, could take advantage of academic education. To remedy the situation, the idea arose of establishing manual labor academies in strategic positions where pupils could earn a part of their expenses, where the common child could have the privilege of going to school, where habits of industry, morality and independence would be taught, and where a literary education, comparable to that given in the usual academy, could be obtained.

Generally speaking, the manual labor movement began in the United States about 1825, chiefly through the European influence of the students of Fellenberg in Switzerland. Connecticut organized manual labor schools in 1819, Maine in 1821, Massachusetts in 1824, New York in 1827, and New Jersey in 1830. Besides, an attempt was made to establish that feature in the already existing literary institutions. Little success was obtained in the older, more firmly established and conservative schools. But the first seminaries and colleges were just growing up in the West where new and radical features were more likely to be adopted. Also, the West was the center from which most of the tracts and teachings of the principal leaders, Neef and Maclure were distributed. Provided with an abundance of cheap land, upon which agricultural and some mechanical pursuits could be

carried on, it was very easy for all academies and colleges in the new states to incorporate that attractive and so-called democratic principle.

In the eastern states, the feature was shortlived. By 1840, practically all talk of the manual labor idea had ceased, but the West continued the plan to the close of the national period. After the ideas of Maclure and Neef had subsided, J. B. Turner, of Illinois College, where the system was in operation for a few years, somewhat changed the arguments to those that should favor institutions from the common schools through the university for the education of the laboring people. His life was spent in continual service to that ideal until congress passed the Land Grant Act for the establishment of Agriculture and Mechanical Colleges, and Illinois chartered the Industrial University. Thus, the manual labor idea in Illinois had served as a basis for the more liberal education of all the people, not only for the professions, but for all classes. The final realization of many of the aims of the original advocates of manual labor came with the introduction of manual training in the high schools, about 1877. A closer examination of the philosophy and examples of the establishment of the so-called Fellenberg movement, may not be out of place.

Fellenberg introduced and established the first system of utilitarian education in the canton of Berne, Switzerland. Experiment began with fifteen or twenty poor boys whom he taught while they worked on the farm or in the shop. The poor school was attached to a rich school, where noble youths were instructed. The latter school gave him considerable reputation and a great deal of popularity so that the number in the former was increased to about one hundred.

Joseph Neef, associated with Fellenberg and acquainted with his experiment, was induced to come to the United States, by William Maclure, who travelled in Europe studying educational movements. Neef began a school in Philadelphia, but later, about 1825, taught a school in New Harmony, Indiana, where Maclure was sending out tracts on the Pestalozzian and Fellenberg manner of instruction. The manual labor feature of that system was planned for the new country of the West.

“While travelling in Europe, having observed how nearly some establishments in Switzerland were enabled to educate, feed and clothe children, by the produce of their own labor, in a country where land is one hundred times dearer than in this country, and labor one-sixth our price, the idea suggested itself of the great facility of accomplishing such a plan here. Circumstances beyond my control, have hitherto prevented the trial; but conceiving my present situation favorable for such an experiment, I shall attempt it. It is more than probable, by the old spelling and horn-book system of five or six years’ learning to read or write, and eight or nine years on Latin or Greek, it would be impossible to make children productive either to themselves or others. The adoption of some system of education, limited to the useful, omitting all the speculative and the ornamental, is positively necessary to the success of such an undertaking.”<sup>1</sup>

The principle for the subjects of study in such a system was based on this foundation: “Mechanism, that injector of mind into matter, for the use of man which substitutes the ingenious organization of inert substances, in the place of manual labor, furthers the progress of real civilization, perhaps more than anything else. It is more than probable that the knowledge of subduing matter to the use of man ought to be the foundation of all useful civilization, and the people who begin otherwise, begin at the wrong end. The study of the simple mechanical powers, such as the lever, screw, pulley, etc., progressing gradually toward the more complicated calculation of wheel work and the application of geometry to all kinds of mill work, the power of running water and practical hydraulics, are all to be learned by careful examination of the machines themselves. The simplest machinery ought to be studied first, such as the most perfect implements of husbandry, and of all the useful arts. The more complicated, for manufactories, such as for spinning and weaving cotton and wool, the construction of the most improved steam engines, being more difficult ought to be learned after the more simple; but as all mechanism has been contrived as our wants required, it must therefore be considered as all useful and necessary to the occupations of

---

<sup>1</sup> Maclure, *Opinions*, 1819-31, v. 1, pp. 55-63.

man, and must be learnt in the order of the occupations of man, and must be learnt in the order of the utility \* \* \* and leaving to the last those inventions which are purely ornamental or for the facilitating of luxury. Mechanism by its nature, being removed from all delusions of fancy, caprice or imagination, as well as its useful applications to most of the occupations of man, ought to be the solid foundation on which is built the future happiness and prosperity of mankind.”<sup>2</sup>

Although natural philosophy was a subject of study in the academies shortly after this writing, there is no evidence to show that the principles of physics were developed from the simple to the complex and made a useful part of local industry and life.

The philosophy of the system of manual labor found principally the following values favoring it:

1. The useful alone is valuable, for “when we abandon utility as the scale of value, we are adrift on the sea of caprice, fancy and whim, without either rudder or compass.”<sup>3</sup>

2. Mental and physical work to be productive must be conjoined. “The Pestalozzian system has a great advantage in all schools of industry, for it not only produces both knowledge and property at the same time, but gives a habit of working and thinking conjointly, which lasts during life, and doubles their powers of production, while it alleviates the fatigue of labor, by a more agreeable occupation of the mind. The teaching by substance or their representations, is much more correct and pleasant, than the dry and vague description of the master; and accompanying the lesson with muscular exercise, is far more healthy than sitting two or three hours on a stool in one position, when both body and mind remain under very fatiguing restraint, injurious equally to the powers and faculties, exhausting the attention without which no lasting impression can be made either in adults or children.”<sup>4</sup>

3. Physical and mental labor conjoined were economical. “The care and economy taught by the Pestalozzian system,

<sup>2</sup> Maclure, *Opinions*, 1819-31, v. 1, pp. 55-63.

<sup>3</sup> Maclure, *Opinions*, v. 1, p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> Maclure, *Opinions*, v. 1, p. 87.



is one of its most permanent features. For the youngest children are taught to keep their clothes carefully, to give them wash and receive them agreeably to the list and to mend them when worn and torn; the only way of preventing them from destroying them through life.”<sup>5</sup>

4. This system saved time in gaining (a) positive knowledge. “By the acquisition of knowledge that can be applied to all the occupations of life; and unchangeable truths of properties of men and things, that surrounding circumstances bring them in contact with, they save a great deal of previous time by gaining as much information in a month, as they would in a year by the old method.”<sup>6</sup>

(b) This system saves time in learning a trade. “To multiply and exaggerate the difficulties to be encountered in teaching all the arts and sciences, would appear to be one of the great objects of all masters and professors; it is an egotism so perfectly consistent with the principle of all commerce and trade, to buy cheap and sell dear, that it ought to be expected; what else could induce a continuance of the old system of retaining an apprentice seven years to learn to make a pair of shoes or sew a coat, keeping a poor child five or six years, tormented with a spelling book? All trades have an interest in enhancing the value of the articles they deal in, and schoolmasters have no other way of increasing their consequence, than by giving sparingly the knowledge they possess, to their pupils; and retaining them as long under their tutelage as possible, which both adds to their consideration and purse.”<sup>7</sup>

5. Work connected with school was superior to play. “Children lose patience, their attention is fatigued, and their good-will exhausted by being kept too long at mental exercises, and their instinct suggests the necessity of keeping up the equilibrium between the vital power or force expended by muscular action, and the intellectual exertions; out of which necessity originated the love of play and amusement, through requiring harder labor than their scholastic studies, such as crooked stick, hand and foot ball, cricket, etc., all creating violent competition, and the useless ambition of

<sup>5</sup> Maclure, *Opinions*, v. 1, p. 91.

<sup>6</sup> Maclure, *Opinions*, v. 1, p. 95.

<sup>7</sup> Maclure, *Opinions*, v. 1, p. 65.



being preeminent in a struggle that tends to no utility, but serves to strengthen and excite malevolent passions of ill-will, envy and hatred, habituating them to the unsociable feeling of gaining pleasure by others' loss, which is the immoral feature of all amusing contention and gambling. When a little older, they follow the sports of men, fishing, shooting, horse-racing, cock-fighting, bull-bating, etc., all tormenting cruelties, finishing by blood and slaughter, strengthening and augmenting brutal passions, which seem peculiarly adapted to our species, from the Roman gladiators, down to the British boxers. It would be more rational to amuse themselves with the trade of a butcher, because the plea of necessity might excuse that cruelty, which cannot be advanced for such amusements. It is more than probable that all such pleasures and pastimes are the remains of savage barbarity, kept up by the idle and tyrannical consumers, imitated by the ignorant and foolish producers, and perpetuated and enforced by long habit."

"If pleasurable ideas can by habit and practice be united with such mortifying exhibitions of human depravity, where every result is annihilated the moment the action is finished, how much more easy would it be for teachers to impress on the tender minds of children the union of pleasurable ideas with the useful occupation of some mechanical art." <sup>s</sup>

The writer furnished the following example and argument of the value of labor compared with play. Labor "would furnish the necessary muscular exercise, so conducive to health, while, at the same time, the gratification would be prolonged by the permanent benefit obtained by the utility of what is produced, and securing pecuniary independence in being capable of practicing a productive trade in the case of necessity. The being taught to make shoes or coats does not force the possessor of such knowledge to be a shoemaker or a tailor, any more than learning mensuration or navigation obliges him to become a surveyor or sailor. Children ought to be trained and educated to suit the probable situation, which circumstances of the next generation may place them in. Even at the present time all our farmers

---

<sup>s</sup> Maclure, *Opinions*, v. 1, p. 147.

and manufacturers, nine-tenths of our population, would be very much benefited by possessing one or two mechanic arts, suitable to their occupations.”<sup>9</sup>

6. The professions were already full. In order to live in the future one must work. “Most of the professions, that do not require manual labor, are overdone in all civilized countries; and in this, it is probable in the next age, few will be able to live comfortably, without the aid of manual labor.”<sup>10</sup>

7. Labor would restore equality, and bring independence and happiness, the absence of which has caused violence and crime. Labor, “would lay the foundation of a highly useful equality and independence; and would continue to strengthen through life, so as to raise them far above all vice and crime, for the great and unnatural inequality of property, knowledge and power is perhaps the cause and origin of all force, violence and crime, where civilization has made any progress. We may perhaps be allowed to hope that the great radical, moral reforms now begun, will secure the greatest happiness to the greatest number, as the most important result for abused humanity.”<sup>11</sup>

However, the United States would be the easiest place on earth to introduce a system of manual labor in its schools.

“This, of all the countries on earth, by moral, physical and all other advantages, is most fit for feeding, clothing and instructing children by their own labor. The cheapness of land and most raw materials that it produces, joined to the excessive dearness of every species of labor, renders the experiment almost certain of success, even though it had failed in every other country.”<sup>12</sup>

The location should be healthy, “removed from swamps or stagnant water, on or near canals, great roads or navigable rivers, surrounded at least by two acres of land for every child, as a productive farm from which they might obtain wherewith to feed them.”<sup>13</sup>

The house should be “a parallelogram or square for centralizing all the inhabitants, that the least time might

<sup>9</sup> Maclure, *Opinions*, v. 1, p. 147.

<sup>10</sup> Maclure, *Opinions*, v. 1, p. 71.

<sup>11</sup> Maclure, *Opinion*, v. 2, p. 202.

<sup>12</sup> Maclure, *Opinion*, v. 2, p. 88.

<sup>13</sup> Maclure, *Opinion*, v. 2, p. 135.

be lost in changing place. A courtyard would occupy the center, and all around the buildings would be gardens, both for the convenience of culture and the collecting of fruit.”<sup>13</sup>

Finally, the cost for the foundation of a system of education, combining theory and practice, would be moderate. “Useful and profitable labor are the only means to production, which under judicious and economical management will support and maintain all the expenses of the establishment. The first expenditure of arranging the locality and some outfits at the commencement would be the only expense out of the peoples’ purse.”

“That children by their own labor can clothe, feed and educate themselves, is completely proven in other countries, and will be very soon in this, beyond a possibility of doubt; after which, it will be easy for the inhabitants to subscribe and buy a farm; each lending a hand to erect buildings, and begin the cultivation, which will secure a useful education to their children, with food and clothing, when the management of the whole will be under the direction of those who are interested in the success and reap the benefits of the establishment.”<sup>14</sup>

Besides the educational tracts that Maclure and his followers published and distributed, the newspapers of the time published articles in favor of the manual labor system. The Illinois Intelligencer had this to say: “In all our schools, and especially in our higher seminaries, systematic exercise ought to be introduced.” (Riding, walking, climbing, vaulting are mentioned.) “They are better suited to the playful feelings of children than to the chastened affections of riper years.” (Manual labor takes up the idle time, relieves the children from mischief, gives money to the needy and exercise to all.) “The regulation among the Jews was that every child should be taught some useful trade, was founded in wisdom and common sense. And what a salutary influence would such an example of industry in those who are to move in the higher walks of life, produce on the community. How far it would go to render industry honorable, how much useful information on the common occupations of life, would be diffused by the learned through the lower classes of

---

<sup>14</sup> Maclure, *Opinions*, v. 1, p. 70.

society. Such knowledge would be useful to every professional man in future life, and especially to members of the gospel in our new settlements, and to missionaries to the heathen. Persons thus educated, if not successful in their profession, would not be helpless. Such a system would enable those who intend to devote their lives to agriculture, mechanical, or manufacturing pursuits, to acquire an education, and then to return to business with their habits unimpaired.”<sup>15</sup>

Convinced that a proper system of education should develop the mental, moral and physical, the manual labor system purported to unite all three aims in one.

The constitution of the Cumberland Presbyterian Synod, published in the Illinois Intelligencer, November 11, 1825, provided for manual labor in its academies: “The committee acting as a board of trustees, shall appoint a skillful manager to superintend the farming establishment, to erect cabins and other buildings, and to take charge of the boarding establishment: that every student shall be employed in manual labor not less than two and not more than three hours per day; and for this purpose the whole number of students shall be divided into suitable classes. The superintendent of the farm shall call on each class in rotation to perform their term of daily labor, and shall be privileged to employ them at such kind of labor, principally, agricultural, as may afford them exercise and conduce to the interests of the institution:—that so much of the produce of the farm as may be necessary shall be appropriated to the use of the boarding establishment.” The constitution continued to speak of the aims of manual labor, most of which have been indicated above.

Rock Spring Theological and High School contemplated “that each student shall labor some small portion of his time for the purpose of preserving health, gaining useful knowledge in agriculture and domestic economy, and lessening expense. It was *Resolved*, That a farm be connected with the institution.”<sup>16</sup>

The education of the Indian, as was to be expected, followed similar lines. “There are 98 Indian children—58 boys—the rest girls. There are two male, and two women teachers besides a man who oversees the work on the farm.

<sup>15</sup> Ill. Int., Oct. 30, 1830.

<sup>16</sup> Ill. Int. Mch. 24, 1827.



Four mechanics are employed—six boys work with them—learning the trade of carpenter, wheelwright, blacksmith and shoemaker. These children gradually learn fast and work well; and both they and their parents are generally well pleased with the school.”<sup>17</sup>

Provisions in the charters of a great number of academies and schools showed that manual labor was a common idea of the times. The Chatham Manual Labor School provided that “the board of trustees shall have entire control of the system of manual labor, and shall determine the proportion of labor of each student, and no student shall be received as a regular member of the school, unless he submits to the performance of such an amount of labor as is enjoined by the trustees, and the trustees shall account to each student, for such labor, which shall be appropriated to discharge his expenses in said school.”<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, literary institutions as well as specific manual labor schools, had a system of labor. Peck described the operation of work at Illinois College thus: “There are also upon the premises a farm, house, barn and workshop for students to use to perform manual labor. The farm consists of 300 acres of land, all under fence. The improvements and stock on the farm are valued at several thousand dollars. Students who choose are allowed to employ a portion of each day in manual labor, either upon the farm or in the work shop. Some individuals earn \$150 each, during the year.”<sup>19</sup>

Niles Weekly Register, published in Baltimore, praised the system in the West. “We are glad to hear that manual labor colleges and schools in Indiana, the true and only system of education for democracies, are in a flourishing condition in that part of the country. We hope the sound sense and good example of the Hoosiers will be in a few years from this time adopted throughout the United States, and that the ancient aristocratic prejudices of cloister learning, will be dispelled before the light of modern truth and science which is penetrating everywhere through the darkness of obsolete usages, and preconceived error, deep-rooted for ages, but now to be unlearned.”<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> 23 An. Rep., M. E. Miss. Soc., p. 28.

<sup>18</sup> Sess. Laws, 1835-6, p. 169.

<sup>19</sup> Peck, Gazetteer, p. 69.

<sup>20</sup> Niles Weekly Register, Aug. 1, 1840.



The feature of manual labor continued a long time in Illinois though at a later date, it was very much more specific in its purpose. Whether it was the cause of the name given to the University of Illinois, Illinois Industrial University, it will be difficult to say, but the manual labor idea came to play a large part in the establishment of a university for the working people.

In advocating a peoples' university, a writer in the *Prairie Farmer*, made use of the manual labor principle. "What we want, to begin with, is simply a Manual Labor School; we would call it a Farm School, because there is the aroma of a House of Correction about the words, "Manual Labor," that is suggestive of juvenile depravity, and of wholesome restraint, and "hard labor for the term of three years," as connected therewith. We want a plain Farm School, for the sons of farmers. Let them be sent to this school at any age between eight and eighteen, as to an academy. Let their education be conducted as is usual in academies, except that more attention shall be paid to two branches, which will be practically useful in their future progress."

"The great distinguishing feature of this establishment should be a farm of about two hundred acres, where could be kept stock of every description, fruit trees of all kinds, etc. Here could be shown the advantages of scientific cultivation; for unless it is advantageous, it is not needed. Here should be tested our theories of manures, general and special; the various methods and modes of planting, and breeding and harvesting crops. And here should be solved that Sphinx-riddle, "Does farming pay?"

"Here the young farmer should be taught all that in any wise pertains to his future occupation. He should learn to analyze soils, and crops; so as to ascertain the wants of one, and the possible deficiencies of the other. He should here learn the use of implements, not only of his own trade, but of those of the blacksmith and carpenter and wheelwright, as well; so that rainy days on his farm should never be lost days, as is too often the case. He should learn to take care of animals; to judge of their points; and to slaughter them. In fact, he should be here trained systematically, as he could not be at home, in every branch of a farmers' profession." <sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, v. 12, p. 185.

"The principle of labor to be recognized, and to be equal, according to the physical ability of each pupil; but not to be so constant or considerable as to interfere with a due amount of study, and heartfelt recreation. The laboring more for practical instruction of the pupil, than a matter of profit to the institution, though it shall be so conducted as to insure the most profit, consistent with the main aim of the instruction of pupils."

"The institution to be open to all, on some basis of representation and contribution, and instruction free. The productive labor of each pupil to be credited to his boarding, and incidental expenses. Nothing but the useful and practical to be taught and the dignity of labor and moral worth, to take precedence of old custom, and barren learning.'" <sup>22</sup>

Before considering the common school a summary of this chapter, and of the opportunities offered by the academy is made.

The Fellenberg movement originated in Switzerland about the beginning of the nineteenth century. Joseph Neef, a pupil of and a teacher with Fellenberg, was induced by William Maclure to come to the United States to inaugurate this system. After some attempts in the East, Neef and Maclure were found at New Harmony, Ind., in 1825, teaching and distributing their ideas. The advantages claimed for the new scheme were: 1. The useful alone was valuable; 2. mental and physical work were valuable only when conjoined; 3. mental and physical work were economical; 4. time was saved in gaining positive knowledge, and in learning a trade; 5. work, connected with manual labor, took the place of useless and harmful play; 6. new opportunities were opened up by which a living could be earned; 7. above all, the system was democratic because it brought equality, happiness and independence to all; 8. the cost of theoretical and practical education was moderate.

No less convinced were the newspapers, churches, missionary societies and educational leaders of Illinois of the value of the plan of manual labor advocated by Maclure and Neef. Accordingly, manual labor schools were established and that feature was incorporated in several literary institu-

---

<sup>22</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, v. 12, p. 455.

tions. That idea, more specific, more refined and more extended, was the basis upon which the Land Grant Act was made, the Illinois Industrial University was chartered and manual training in high schools was begun.

The academy in Illinois was a well established institution by 1850. Up to that time, there was practically no other means in the state for obtaining a useful, cultural, or a professional secondary education. But the academy was limited in its clientele because communication was undeveloped, transportation by railroad was possible only between the chief towns, and wagon roads, a greater part of the year, were too muddy for convenient travel. Consequently, chartered or private academic institutions had to be established in towns where there was the possibility of having a local student body. Of course, non-resident pupils were welcomed but they came in no large numbers. From the sources of student population, sufficient numbers to maintain a school were frequently lacking, so that the academy had to close its doors or sell to a more enterprising master. For example, in the period from 1835 to 1840, Springfield had a succession of eight or ten institutions, struggling for a year or so, and then passing out of existence. In spite of the short life, especially of the unchartered institutions, and several of the chartered academies, the academic system was kept in existence in the larger towns until the free school law of 1855 made it possible for the academies to have public support. Usually in the North, the weaker institutions took advantage of the law, but some of the stronger and well supported academies that had less need for public financial aid, continued to serve the more select group of people.

It was evident, therefore, that many of the children of the state were unable to attend academies. But the people were too close to the traditions of the states from whence they migrated not to make attempts to provide some of the educational means that were used at home. Hence, the next division will consider the common school system as distinguished from the academy, and will show how the upper part of the former ordinarily developed into the free public high school, and the means by which the latter was permitted to become a free institution if it so desired.

## PART II. THE COMMON SCHOOL.

### CHAPTER VII.

#### *The Apprenticeship System.*

The educational provision for the well-to-do classes has been discussed in the chapters on the academies. The poor people from early colonial days on, were apprenticed to masters as indentured servants in order to learn a trade or profession. Ordinarily, the term of service was seven years, but the boys had to serve the master until they became twenty-one years of age, and the girls, eighteen years of age. The apprentice received no wage in the industry in which he worked. His responsibility was to the master instead of to the parent. But the master was required to furnish the apprentice with clothing, food and a home, as well as to look after his morals and to teach him the craft.

The master had to train the indentured servant in the mystery of the craft so that the latter could become a self-supporting individual. About the last half of the seventeenth century, a policy developed which required the master also to teach the servant reading, writing, and arithmetic. This applied to the principal industries and professions of the time, namely, shipping, agriculture, household service, commerce, teaching, law and medicine. The reading of law and the reading of medicine in the offices of eminent local lawyers and physicians is but the survival of the apprenticeship system.

Moreover, the early laws required, quite frequently, that the apprentice pay an enrollment and an exit fee. The master had to acknowledge the indenture before a court of record which made the contract a public affair. This public enrollment was necessary to insure both parties to the contract against the violation of the agreement. If either party failed to live up to the terms of the contract, he was liable to summons before the police power of the locality. The master



could be discharged and the servant bound out to another. The servant was liable to the penalty of a fine and the lengthening of the term of service.

Indentured servants, early in colonial days, were mostly white persons: debtors, soldiers of fortune, orphans and kidnapped children, all from Europe, as well as poor people who sold themselves to ship owners for passage to the new world. Not until the eighteenth century did the negro indentured class outnumber the whites. One of the prominent educational problems of that day was the instruction of all classes of indentured servants. The southern colonies required reading taught to the negro and the white, with writing and arithmetic to the latter, in addition.

Now the eastern and southern states, by 1818, had not given up completely the master and servant means of educating the children of the common man. But as has been pointed out, Illinois had few eastern settlers until 1830. Consequently, the apprenticeship system was established by law, which was mainly southern, the principal features of which were these:

1. Boys under twenty-one and girls under eighteen might be apprenticed with or without the consent of the parent or guardian.

2. The mother of illegitimate children should bind them over to a master.

3. If the father was dead, a fugitive from justice or incapacitated, the mother had the right to apprentice his children.

4. Poor children were bound to a master by the overseers of the poor.

5. A copy of the indenture should be recorded with the probate judge.

6. The probate judge, or two justices of the peace were empowered to receive complaints of apprentices and summon the master to appear in court.

7. A penalty was imposed on the apprentice for assault on the master, or the violation of the terms of the contract.

8. The apprentice could not be removed from the state.

9. The master had to furnish the apprentice comfortable board, lodging, washing, clothing and so much schooling as shall be deemed right.



10. "That the master or mistress to whom such child shall be bound, as aforesaid, shall cause such child to be taught to read and write, and the ground rules of arithmetic, and, shall give also unto such apprentices, a new Bible, and two new suits of clothes, suitable to his or her condition at the expiration of his or her term of service, *Provided however*, that when such apprentice is a negro or mulatto child, it shall not be necessary to insert in said indenture that such negro or mulatto shall be taught to write, or the knowledge of arithmetic."<sup>1</sup>

11. If a guardian failed to educate his apprentice in reading, writing and the ground rules of arithmetic, the probate judge was empowered to appoint another master, "and superintend the education of such minor or orphan."<sup>2</sup>

As late as 1840, indentures were still being made for white children, an example of which follows: "This Indenture made and entered into this 31st day of August, A. D., 1840, between James Thompson and George Thompson, minors, of their own free will and consent, and by and with the consent and approbation of William Thompson, their father, of the county of Shelby and the State of Illinois of the one part, and Daniel Golloher of the same county and the State, of the other part witnesseth: that the same James Thompson and George Thompson does by these presents of their own free will and accord and by and with the consent of William Thompson, their father, bind each of themselves to the said Daniel Golloher as an apprentice to learn the art of Farming, to dwell with and serve the said Daniel Golloher from the day of the date hereof, until the 10th day of August, 1850, at which time the said James Thompson will be twenty-one years old, And the said George Thompson until the 17th day of September, A. D., 1851, at which time the said George Thompson will be twenty-one years old, during all of which time or term the said Apprentices their said Master will and faithfully shall serve, his secrets to keep, and his lawful commands everywhere at all times readily obey, they or either of them shall do no damage to their said Master nor knowingly suffer any to be done by others, they or either of them shall not waste the Goods of their said Master, nor lend

<sup>1</sup> Sess. Laws, 1826.

<sup>2</sup> Sess. Laws, 1830.

them unlawfully to any. At cards, dice or any other unlawful Game they shall not play, Matrimony either of them shall not contract during their said term. Taverns, Ail-houses, and places of Gaming they shall not frequent or resort from the service of their said Master, either of them shall not absent himself, but in all things and at all times they and each of them shall demean and conduct themselves as good Apprentices—words can't tell—during the whole term aforesaid. And the said Daniel Golloher on his part does hereby Covenant and agree to furnish each of the said Apprentices good and sufficient diet, clothing, lodging, and the other necessities convenient and useful for said Apprentices during the whole term aforesaid, and also shall cause each of said Apprentices to be taught to read and write, and the Ground rules of Arithmetic, and shall also give unto each of the said Apprentices a New Bible and two new Suits of Clothes suitable to their condition at the expiration of their term of service, and also Eighty Acres of Common Land for each fit for farming to be as near as may be to timber and prairie or all timber and In testimony whereof we have hereunto Set our hands and Seale the day and year first written.

Attest Joseph Oliver James his  
X Thompson Seal  
mark

George <sup>his</sup> X Thompson Seal  
mark

William <sup>his</sup> X Thompson Seal  
mark

Daniel Golloher Seal<sup>3</sup>

As early as 1819, negro indentures were recorded at Edwardsville. The following excerpt from one of those records showed the personal and educational provision of the contract: "During all which term the said boys shall faithfully serve and obey all the lawful commands of their said mistress. And on her part said Elizabeth doth bind and hereby obligate herself, her heirs, etc., to teach or cause to be

<sup>3</sup> Shelby County Probate Record, 1839-49, v. 1, p. 52.

taught both said boys to read. Should their abilities enable her to so do and also to provide and furnish them with good wholesome food, clothing and lodging suitable for persons in their condition.”<sup>4</sup> \*

Slavery and colored indentures were closely related in Illinois. The *Intelligencer*, August 12, 1818, advocated a system of indenture with a term of service of forty years in which the servants were to be instructed in religion and the rudiments of education. “The word ‘servant’ was used to cover a multitude of sins. No matter under what name the farmers held their negroes—whether as ‘servants,’ ‘yellow boys,’ or ‘colored girls’—the fact still remained that slavery existed in the Territory of Illinois as completely as in any of the Southern States. It was not limited to settlements and towns along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, but was practiced all over the southern portion of what is now the State of Illinois, and as far north as Sangamon county, which was then just beginning to be settled.”<sup>5</sup>

But Illinois was admitted as a free state. In the constitutional convention, three classes of men existed—those for slavery, those against slavery, and those who wished to compromise. The latter, being the larger, won. The constitution was adopted and Illinois admitted on the ground that the Ordinance of 1787, governing the Northwest Territory, did not apply to negroes already held as slaves in Illinois at the time when it was enacted. “The state was admitted, and the right to retain negroes as indentured servants was recognized and secured.”<sup>6</sup>

Slavery was tacitly recognized by the sixth article of the Constitution of 1818 in the form of indentures for one year with the right of renewal. “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall hereafter be introduced into this state otherwise than for the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted. Nor shall any male person arrived at the age of twenty-one years, nor any female person arrived at the age of eighteen years, be held to serve any person as a servant under any indenture hereafter made,

---

<sup>4</sup> A Register of Papers Belonging to Free Persons of Color, Madison Co.

<sup>5</sup> The Illinois Census of 1835 showed 304 negro indentures.

<sup>6</sup> The Illinois Census of 1845 showed 226 negro indentures.

<sup>\*</sup> Harris, *Negro Servitude in Illinois*, p. 15.

<sup>\*</sup> Harris, *Negro Servitude in Illinois*, p. 26.

unless such person shall enter into such indenture while in a state of perfect freedom, and on condition that a bona fide consideration received or to be received for their service. Nor shall any indenture of any negro or mulatto hereafter made and executed out of this state, or if made in this state, where the term of service exceeds one year, be of the least validity, except those given in the case of apprenticeship."<sup>7</sup>

The education of the negro and the mulatto was bound up with the system of indentures. The apprenticeship system was, moreover, recognized by the state constitution.

Two forms of apprenticeship education have existed in the United States. The colonial system depended on the personal relation between master and servant. The system since the Civil War has had no personal or domestic element, being a means by which entrance to some trades could be had. The former had the advantage by which the apprentice could learn a trade and all of its ramifications. Moreover, the apprentice, living in the household of his master was considered as one of the family, on the same social basis as the master and eligible to marry his master's daughter, but the term of service of seven years was so long that the apprentice spent a lot of time in work not connected with his future trade. That work, usually, was day labor on the farm, and the apprentice was virtually a slave, so classed in some of the colonial laws. Naturally, it was hard to hold youth in America to the apprenticeship system because they could run away to the frontier, take up land for themselves and become independent. Consequently, the system was limited to small numbers of youth, either the poor who were public charges, or the negroes who could not escape the yoke of servitude. The latter was made a slave in the free state of Illinois by the indentures, renewable at the expiration of one year. However, in all cases, the master was required to fulfill his obligation in endeavoring to teach or causing to be taught, the apprentice.

The academy provided education for the wealthy, the indenture system provided for some of the public poor and the negroes; the next discussion will consider the first attempt for the free education of all the children of the state.

---

<sup>7</sup> Constitution of 1818, Art. VI.



## CHAPTER VIII.

*The Free School Law of 1825.*

Before discussing the results of slavery on the whole educational system of Illinois, a brief statement of the slavery struggle from 1818 to 1825, should be given. The Illinois representatives in Congress voted against Missouri entering as a slave state. The majority of the people of Illinois were angry at that vote. The southern sympathizers decided to retaliate. They began to organize a plot to call a convention to change the constitution of the state to permit slavery. The Spectator, published at Edwardsville, exposed the undertaking, with the result that the plan for calling a constitutional convention failed for the time being. In 1822, senators, representatives, a governor and legislators were to be elected. The anti-slavery men won the congressional election and the governorship, but the pro-slavery men succeeded in winning a majority of the seats in the state legislature. Shameful proceedings were carried through the state legislature and a resolution was passed for a constitutional convention. Organizations were built up on both sides. The pro-slavery men established a central organization at Vandalia with committees in all the counties of the state. A secret convention was held by the anti-slavery men, made up of Rev. J. M. Peck, thirty other preachers and Governor Coles. Pamphlets were distributed by the thousands to the people of Illinois, through this organization. Birkbeck, the English farmer of southern Illinois, wrote excellent articles against slavery which were very effective. Coles bought the Intelligencer, published at Vandalia, and had copies containing much anti-slavery material sent to the old subscribers even if they failed to pay their subscriptions. When the vote came for a convention and slavery it was defeated.

The results of the victory, at least to the people of Illinois, were very great. The question, whether Illinois should



be a slave or a free state, was settled forever. A contest with the federal government over the question of changing the constitution, through which Illinois entered the Union, to one that would recognize slavery, was prevented. Free labor, the energetic and progressive farmer with the merchant and professional men from the East, developed the country otherwise impossible with slavery tacitly recognized. Finally, southern immigration with its institutions, was checked. The easterner began to supplant the southerner. New ideas of the rights of the children of the common man were brought along. The New England common school began to be advocated.

However, a few leaders, such as General Duncan, Rev. Peck and Governor Coles saw the tremendous importance of the education of the children of the state, before many New Englanders had arrived. These leaders believed that slavery and ignorance were the twin relics of barbarism. The surest way to save the state from the blight of slavery was through enlightenment. The older people were, perhaps, beyond the direct influence of schools, but the youth must be taught the evils of slavery and ignorance, in free schools provided by the state, in order to insure the future of the state and the Republic. The preamble of the Free School Law of 1825 was the classic statement of those ideals:

“To enjoy our rights and liberties, we must understand them;—their security and protection ought to be the first object of a free people;—and it is a well established fact no nation has ever continued long in the enjoyment of civil and political freedom, which was not both virtuous and enlightened;—and believing that advancement of literature always has been, and ever will be the means of developing more fully the rights of man;—that the mind of every citizen of every republic, is the common property of society, and constitutes the basis of its strength and happiness;—it is considered the peculiar duty of a free government, like ours, to encourage and extend the improvement and cultivation of the intellectual energies of the whole, Therefore,”<sup>1</sup>

The free school law of 1825 was unique in that, at that time, there were only a few states in the East that had a free

<sup>1</sup> Sess. Laws, 1825, p. 121.

school law. The essential features of the law provided that a school system was to be established by law; that the school was to be free to all children between certain ages, and that all expenses for the schools thus established should be met by a general tax upon property:

"Sec. 1—Be it enacted by the people of the State of Illinois represented in the General Assembly, That there shall be established a common school or schools in each of the counties of this state, which shall be open and free to every class of white citizens between the ages of five and twenty-one years: Provided, That persons over the age of twenty-one years, may be admitted into such schools, on such terms as the trustees of the school may prescribe \* \* \*."

"Sec. 15—Be it further enacted, That for the encouragement and support of schools, respectively established within this state, according to this act, there shall be appropriated, for that purpose, two dollars out of every hundred thereafter to be received in the treasury of this state; also, five-sixths of the interest arising from the school fund; which shall be divided annually between the different counties of this state, in proportion to the number of white inhabitants in each county, under the age of twenty-one years, after the next census shall be taken; until which time no dividend shall be taken."

Finally, school districts were to be incorporated by the action of the county commissioners' courts, upon a petition of a majority of the qualified voters of any settlement. The voters in each district, by a majority of the votes, could levy a tax not exceeding one-half per centum on property, and appoint trustees and other officers to manage the system. Since the origin of the bill is a disputed question in Illinois education, an examination of the evidence is pertinent. The authorship of the free school law was generally attributed to General Duncan, a member of the Senate from Madison county, afterwards elected to Congress and the governorship of the state, who introduced it in the upper branch of the legislature.<sup>3</sup> Whether or not he was the author has been difficult to determine. At least, he was its ardent supporter in and out of the legislature, but he evaded the issue when asked by a

<sup>2</sup> Sess. Laws, 1825, pp. 121-25.

<sup>3</sup> Sen. Jr., 1824-25, p. 220.

political opponent at home if he were not the author of the free school system which taxed the rich for the benefit of the poor. Duncan acknowledged that he had introduced the bill, and had supported it with uncommon zeal, in the belief that it would be found beneficial to the state, but he did not say that he had formulated its principles.<sup>4</sup>

Governor Coles was an enthusiastic advocate, if not the author, of the bill. Coles was having a bitter personal and political fight over slavery. Southern sympathizers sued him for liberating the slaves that he had brought to Illinois from Virginia. The basis for the damage claim was that other slave owners would be influenced to do likewise. Coles was burned in effigy in many towns of southern Illinois on account of his powerful anti-slavery influence. Hence, it seems likely that General Duncan, a long-time resident of the state as well as a successful Indian fighter, was put forward to introduce the bill with the least likelihood of opposition.

Moreover, Governor Coles was the type of man from whom such a bill was most likely to emanate. He was a Virginian of the aristocracy, the secretary to James Madison, a special ambassador to Russia, and personally acquainted with the leading statesmen of his day. Several letters were exchanged between Coles and Jefferson, who were personal acquaintances, on the subjects of slavery and education. To free his slaves, Coles went to Illinois. But he also had in mind Jefferson's ideals of raising the lot of the common white man.

In Governor Coles' paper, just after the free school law was passed, appeared a great deal of material on the subject of free education. The purpose of those writings was evidently in support of the establishment of an educational system for the poor man. The first article worthy of notice was an excerpt from the fourth annual report of the acting superintendent of the common schools in the state of New York. It showed the legislature of that state how much money was paid out of the state treasury, how much was raised from the local school fund, and how much was raised by tax, all for the common schools. How many children were being taught, and how much money was being appropriated, showed the impor-

---

<sup>4</sup> *Spectator*, May 27, 1826.

tance of the common school system and the wisdom and magnanimity of the legislature.<sup>5</sup>

That article was valuable data in showing the same principles of support for public education in operation in New York, the same principles having been established by the law of 1825.

The next article, on the ignorance of the peasantry of France, should be interpreted as showing the necessity for free common education, before republican liberty and the elective franchise could mean anything to the people of Illinois.

“The Peasantry of France are extremely ignorant. Whole villages may be found, where not more than three or four can read. Even in the immediate vicinity of Paris, and within the echoes of the legislative debates, there are towns in which not three newspapers are taken, and those not by persons who actually belong to the people. The eloquent pleas for liberty are of no effect, for they are not heard by the mass of the nation. Hence no general political spirit exists, except when the popularity of individuals is concerned, or as taxes of the state affect private interest, and national attention can hardly be directed to refined questions on the management of the elections and the free expression of opinion. So great is the popular ignorance, that the most liberal policies have even advocated the very wide extension of the elective franchise, believing it to be first necessary to educate the nation.”<sup>6</sup>

Finally, a long third article was the statement of Thomas Jefferson’s plan for a system of education. Since it emanated from “the greatest sage and most philanthropic statesman of the age,” so the introduction said, the plan was worthy of consideration by the people of Illinois.

Judging from Coles’ messages to the legislature, and his publication of Jefferson’s plan for the establishment of a complete system of education through the university, it was probable that Coles planned for a similar system in Illinois. The first step was the creation of the free school system, which, of course, was the common school. The supervisory power of the primary schools should rest with the college, a secondary institution with jurisdiction over a territory of

<sup>5</sup> *Intelligencer*, March 4, 1825.

<sup>6</sup> *Intelligencer*, March 4, 1825.



about eighty miles square. All of the colleges of the state should be controlled by a single university, as the administrative authority, and providing the highest scientific and literary opportunities. Jefferson's ideas of a university were similar to the French organization of higher education.\* However, Jefferson argued for a free system of common schools, the support of which was to come from those who were able to pay a tax:

“And will the wealthy individual have no retribution? And what will this be? 1. The peopling his neighborhood with honest, useful and enlightened citizens, understanding their own rights and firm in their perpetuation; 2. When his own descendants became poor, which they generally do within three generations, (no law of primogeniture now perpetuating wealth in the same families) their children will be educated by the then rich, and the little advance he now makes, while rich himself will be repaid by the then rich, to his descendants when they become poor, and thus give them a chance of rising again. This is a solid consideration and should go down to the bosom of every parent. This will be a seed sowed in fertile ground. It is a provision for his family, looking to distant times, and far beyond what he now has in hand for them. Let every man count backward before he comes to the ancestor who made the fortune he now holds; most will be stopped at the first generation, many at the second, a few will reach the third, and not one in the state go beyond the fifth \* \* \* Where is the man whose heart is so cold as not to grow warm at the recital of youths like these?”

Only little evidence has come to light to show whether any free school districts were ever established. Certainly, there are no published records of the treasurer showing that any money was appropriated out of the state funds for the support of free schools in any district under the law of 1825. There might have been, however, quite a few districts established for a short time, and then abandoned. Governor Ford, in his history of Illinois, stated that the law worked well and then contradicted himself by saying that there was much opposition to it. The Sangamo Journal, February 9,

---

\* The main difference is that Jefferson's ideas antedated the French ideas by 25 years.

† *Intelligencer*, March 11, 1825.



1832, said that it was not known that society ever received any benefits whatever from the plan adopted in 1825, which was not approved by the people. A little later, the same paper made a similar statement about this law: "On the 15th of January, 1825, an act was passed to provide for the establishment of free schools. This act was accompanied with a very complaisant and graceful introduction, but the free schools were to be sustained only by a tax levied upon the district and disbursed by six or eight officers. The practicability of this plan, I think, has never been tested, and, I would suppose, for very good reasons."<sup>8</sup>

Pushing the search for evidence further, one was induced to investigate some of the very few surviving county commissioner court records of that time. For the law provided that, on petition of a majority of the legal voters of the county to the above named court, a free school district should be laid out, and a tax levied for the support of education in that district. If such districts had been established, the record of their creation would probably have been entered in the court journal.

On examination, the court journal of Madison county for 1825, showed that five free school districts had been established in the county. Also, the same record provided for the taking of the census in the county as provided by the free school law in order to determine the amount of appropriation to be made by the state to Madison county.

The free districts established in Madison county were Alton, Edwardsville, Ebenezer, Silver Creek, and Wood River. The record defined the boundaries of the districts following the petitions of people in those districts. The court orders of which the Alton district was an example, were put in these words: "A petition this day filed for the purpose of establishing free schools in pursuance of an act of the general assembly, approved Jan. 15, 1825, it is therefore ordered that a school district be established to be called and known by the name of the Alton District containing the following limits, viz.: To commence on the Mississippi River at the mouth of Wood River and to run up the latter river, to where the sectional line between fractional sections 18 and 19 in Town 5

---

<sup>8</sup> Sang. Jr., Dec. 14. 1833.

North, in Range 9 West of the third principle meridian intersects it; thence East on the said sectional line to the sectional line between sections 16 and 17 of Town aforesaid; thence North on said line to the North boundary of said Town; thence West on said boundary line to the Mississippi River, and thence down said river to the place of beginning. Ordered by County Commissioner Court at Edwardsville.”<sup>9</sup>

The creation of those school districts, however, does not prove that schools were actually in operation in these districts and the establishment of free schools in them, should be had for all the older counties, but only a very few records have been preserved. The attitude of the people of the counties on public laws and questions of the day was expressed and registered in the court proceedings. Petitions and opinions of opposition on nearly every subject imaginable were inserted in the county records. Evidently, at least in Madison county, there was little opposition to the law of 1825 because not one objection to it was raised in these records.

Moreover, the newspapers published at Edwardsville had practically no opposition to the creation of free school districts and the law of 1825. At about the same time, as the establishing of the free school district, a parent expressed the hope that schools would soon be in operation: “It has become fashionable of late to declaim on the advantages of education. Every one who wishes to be thought a patriot, a good citizen, or a man of sense, talks loudly of the importance of a system of general education, as a grand means of perpetuating our civil liberties, and improving our moral condition.”

“Now, I have no disposition to check the ardor of these patriotic orators and writers; only, I wish it may not end in declamation. Our children will gain but little useful knowledge from most eloquent harangues in favor of schools if there be no schools established. It were a thousand pities that so many fine productions should be lost to posterity; that the authors should receive none of that posthumous reward, the applause and gratitude if succeeding generations could not read them.”<sup>10</sup> The writer continued to say that the tax was not sufficient to provide all the advantages desired for a free education.

<sup>9</sup> Madison Co. Court Rec., 1825, June Term, p. 152.

<sup>10</sup> Spectator, July 30, 1825.

Another writer in the same paper expressed a favorable, though somewhat different point of view: "That we consider the late law of our state on the subject of education, on the whole, adapted to our wants; and, we must add, honorable to the head and heart of its author." "We have some objections to its details, and so we might, possibly to the details of any plan."<sup>11</sup>

Again, a writer in the *Spectator*, found the law a means of getting the proper kind of teachers, the right kind of inspection for schools, longer terms, less expense and a means by which, through experience, the people could tell whether the law was satisfactory: "By the aid of the School Fund, arising from the sale of land, with the trifling tax on property, and voluntary contributions, we could offer better inducements to competent teachers, who might thereby be induced to devote their time and talent to the arduous task."

"Schools established under the provision of the law would be subject to inspection of a body of men selected by the people of each district, whose duty it would be to watch over both pupils and teacher, and know the progress of the school in learning. They would be permanent, and liable to fewer and shorter vacations—so discouraging and injurious to children."

"The expense to individuals would eventually, if not at first, be considerably less than the present loose and inefficacious method, and would gradually diminish as the school increases. Lastly, the plan, if adopted, would be tested. The citizens would then be able to judge from experience, and either amend or lay it aside, as they should find it advisable."<sup>12</sup>

Evidently the experience obtained was disastrous to the free school idea because the legislature (in 1827) amended the law of 1825 so that one could be taxed only by his own consent for the support of schools:

"Sec. 3—The legal voters of any school district, at their regular meetings, shall have power in their discretion, to cause either the whole or one-half of the sum required, to support a school in such a district, to be raised by taxation. And if only one-half be raised by taxation, the remainder

<sup>11</sup> *Spectator*, Sept. 10, 1825.

<sup>12</sup> *Spectator*, Sept. 10, 1825.

may be required to be paid by the parents, master, and guardian, in proportion to the number of pupils which each of them shall send to school."

"Sec. 4—No person shall hereafter be taxed for the support of any free school in this state, unless by his or her own free will and consent, first had and obtained, in writing. And any person so agreeing and consenting, shall be taxed in the manner prescribed in the act to which this is an amendment."<sup>13</sup>

However, Peck stated that, "many good primary schools now exist without a legislative sanction, and where three or four of the leading families unite, and exert their influence in favor of the measure, it is not difficult to have a good school."<sup>14</sup>

Provision existed by law, nevertheless, through which the people of a locality could organize themselves into school districts and might tax themselves by consent, but they could receive no share of the public funds under the control of the state because the two per cent clause of the law of 1825 had been repealed in 1829. Upon petition from the inhabitants of a township, the sixteenth section could be sold, the proceeds funded, the interest from which could be used for the maintenance of the common school. "To some extent, the people have availed themselves of this provision and receive the interest of the fund."<sup>15</sup>

The distributive share of the common school fund was never sufficient to maintain common schools in any county without the supplementation of tuition fees. When a teacher desired employment, he drew up articles of agreement by which the term of service was stated, usually for not more than three months, and the rate of tuition for each pupil. If a large enough number of subscribers was received to meet the expected compensation, school was started; if not, the teacher went to other school districts to make similar experiments until a satisfactory list of prospective pupils was obtained. The following is a typical contract:

"Articles of agreement, drawn this 25th of May, 1833, between Allen Parlier, of the county of Washington and the

<sup>13</sup> Sess. Laws, 1826-7, p. 364.

<sup>14</sup> Peck, Gazetteer, p. 83

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.



State of Illinois, of the one part, and we, the undersigned, of said county and State, witnesseth, that the said Parlier binds himself to teach a school of spelling, reading, writing and the foregoing rules of arithmetic for the term of three months for \$2 per scholar, per quarter; said Parlier further binds himself to keep good order in said school, will teach five days in each week, all due school hours, and will make up lost time, except muster days, and will set up with twenty scholars, the subscribers to furnish a comfortable house, with all convenience appertaining thereto, the school to commence as soon as the house is fixed. N. B.—Wheat, pork, hogs, beeswax, tallow, deer skins, wool and young cattle, all of which will be taken at the market price delivered at my house, at the expiration of said school, day and date above written.

Subscribers' names.

Allen Parlier."<sup>16</sup>

It was the exception rather than the rule, that districts and towns voted to tax themselves for the support of elementary education during the time between the annulment of the law of 1825 and the passage of the free school law in 1855. Tuition remained the practice to the latter date. The *Prairie Farmer*, in 1852, said that it was customary to employ male teachers in the winter and females in the summer. "Males get two dollars per scholar, females, one dollar and a half per week."<sup>17</sup> In the settlement of an estate, recorded in the probate documents of Shelby county for 1844, a charge of \$22.50 was allowed for the schooling of three children for three years at the rate of \$2.50 each, per year.<sup>18</sup>

Another record contained this evidence on the same question: "On this 10th day of January, 1848, came Patrena Earp guardian for the heirs of Josiah Porthman dec. and made following settlement to wit—credit for the year 1844 for schooling, \$16.00. Credit for the year 1845 for schooling, \$2.50 each—\$7.50. Credit for the year 1846 for schooling, \$1.50 each—\$4.50. Credit for the year 1847 at \$2 each—\$6."<sup>18</sup>

To insure the permanence of free institutions in Illinois, enlightenment of the youth of the state was thought neces-

<sup>16</sup> State Supt. Rep., 1883-4, p. 104.

<sup>17</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, April 12, 1852, p. 175.

<sup>18</sup> Shelby County Probate Rec. 1839-1849, p. 152.

sary by means of a system of free common schools. The law of 1825 provided that a school system should be established, that the schools should be free to all children, and that the schools thus established should be supported by two per cent of all the yearly revenues due the state and by a local, general property tax. Governor Coles was probably the author of the law rather than Senator Duncan and drew his ideas for a complete system of education of primary, secondary and university instruction from Thomas Jefferson's scheme, with which Coles was thoroughly familiar. The first concern was with primary instruction which the law of 1825 made possible. Five free school districts were created in Madison county within a few months after the passage of the bill. No complaint, however, was made against the law in the Edwardsville paper, or in the county court, but other counties must have been opposed to free schools, because the legislature repealed the public tax feature two years later and the two per cent clause in 1829. From this time to the passage of the free school law of 1855, common schools were supported largely by tuition paid by the parents.\*

The friends of the common school and the educational leaders in the state began immediately to try to put it on a firm basis; an educational survey of the state was made, which resulted in a memorial to the legislature and an address to the people for the creation of free common schools and the establishment of county seminaries for the training of teachers. These features are developed in the next chapter.

---

\* The following section of the school law of 1845 shows that tuition charges were legal: "Provided, that the expenses of such fuel and furniture as aforesaid shall be apportioned among the scholars according to the number of days taught, and collected with tuition fees from the parents or guardians of such children." Sess. Laws, 1845, p. 65, Sec. 61.

## CHAPTER IX.

*The Movement of 1835.*

The efforts for the inauguration of a common school system in the State did not die out with the virtual repeal of the school law of 1825. Political speakers, the State over, in their campaign for election, never failed to mention their ideas upon the education of the people. Col. Ewing, Speaker of the lower house of the legislature, and Abraham Lincoln were examples of campaigners who addressed their constituents on the value of education as the means of perpetuating free institutions.

The former said: "This is a subject, however, of more vital importance to society than any other. Its utility can not be properly estimated, without going too elaborately into its discussion. But there is a spirit abroad in many portions of this Union, whose purpose is devoted to the general education of the youth of the country, and the establishment of a system of schools, which will insure this grand purpose through all future time. The honest man, and the friend of his country, are looking to a system of schools and colleges for the general diffusion of knowledge as the only remedy for many existing evils in the body politic. I know no measure of its importance. It affords the surest guaranty against the arts of the ambitious, and the madness of party. Either intelligence must be generally diffused, or all we hold dear must be exposed to shipwreck for the mistakes of misguided judgment, or the deleterious influence of maddening and factious declamation of reckless demagogues, who live in popular commotion, and whose object is personal aggrandizement."<sup>1</sup>

The latter said: "Fellow Citizens: Having become a candidate for the honorable office of one of your Representatives in the next General Assembly of this State, in accordance with an established custom and the principles of true

<sup>1</sup> Ill. Mag., v. 1, p. 383.

republicanism, it becomes my duty to make known to you—the people whom I propose to represent—my sentiments with regard to local affairs. \* \* \* “Upon the subject of education, not presuming to dictate any plan or system respecting it, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in. That every man may receive at least a moderate education, and thereby be enabled to read the histories of his own and other countries, by which he may duly appreciate the value of our free institutions, appears to be an object of vital importance, even on this account alone, to say nothing of the advantages and satisfaction to be derived from all being able to read the scriptures and other works, both of a religious and moral nature, for themselves. For my part I desire to see the time when education, and by its means, morality, sobriety, enterprise and industry, shall become much more general than at present, and should be gratified to have it in my power to contribute something, to the advancement of any measure which might have a tendency to accelerate the happy period.”<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, the necessity for the education of the children of the State was pressing. Immigrants were coming by the thousands; the eyes of the East were turned toward the West. Should the State grow up in lawless barbarism, due to ignorance, or should it become enlightened through the schools? All were agreed that a common school education was needed, but how to get a system for that purpose was unsettled. Judge Hall summed up the situation thus: “Common schools have increased a little in number, though not much perhaps in character. The defect exists altogether in the want of some general system. Education is decidedly popular, and all classes were willing to contribute to the introduction and support of schools. But how to obtain the desired object, is a question upon which there is as yet no settled opinion.”<sup>3</sup>

Hall concluded by saying that a local, individual school system was practically valueless. A state system should replace it. “A common school may enlighten to some extent a little neighborhood; but in order to disseminate intelligence throughout the whole mass of people, to elevate national

<sup>2</sup> Sang. Jr., March 15, 1832. A Lincoln.

<sup>3</sup> Ill. Month. Mag., Dec. 1831, p. 102.



character, and to develop the mental resources of the whole country, there must be a union of action among the friends of education. Our politicians must become deeply imbued with a sense of the importance of the subject; and our professional, literary, and scientific men must come out from the retirement of their closets, and the enthrallments of their private avocations and labor for the public. The subject needs to be stripped of many theories that disfigure it, or give it a shadowy existence in the eyes of practical men; and to have its realities presented in their naked truth, and vigor, and beauty. The clouds of prejudice, which envelope it, ought to be dispelled, prejudices which relate to forms, to systems, to men, and to sects, and not as we sincerely believe, to subject matter. Every rational man desires knowledge, and wishes to see his children elevated in the scale of human beings. The objections are to means, the agents, and the manner of instruction."<sup>4</sup>

The education of the children of Illinois was, moreover, a national affair. Mr. Gatewood, who championed the bill of 1835, in his address to the senate, said that the scepter that ruled the country would pass from the East to the valley of the Mississippi. Therefore, the education of the children was primary.

"The time is not far distant, and many, who are now active upon the stage, may yet live to see the day, when a majority of the people comprising these United States will reside in the Valley of the Mississippi. The scepter must soon pass over the Alleghanies, never again to return. The North, the East, and the South must soon, in a political point of view, be tributary to the West. The Land of the Puritans, the Empire State, the Old Dominion, and all, with their ancient institutions, their laurels, their heroes and their statesmen, big as they are with the praises of other days, must in a short time do homage to the great Valley of the Mississippi. The liberties of all America must be committed to the people of this valley for safe-keeping and preservation. The preservation of these liberties must depend upon the virtue and intelligence of the people of the West; must depend upon the very children, one-third of whom, are now destitute of the

---

<sup>4</sup> Ill. Month. Mag., v. 1, p. 273.

means of instruction and growing up in ignorance. \* \* \*  
 The subject of education in the West then must be—it is a subject of deep and anxious solicitude.”<sup>5</sup>

The time was ripe for the statesmen of the day to make plans for the creation by law of a common school system, acceptable to the people. Judge Hall, the foremost literary writer of the State, was invited to address the people in Vandalia on the subject of education. This opportunity was seized to organize, in 1833, “The Illinois Institute of Education,” the purpose of which, as stated in the constitution of the society, “shall be the advancement of education in Illinois, especially in the common schools.”

After re-affirming the belief in the value of education as the savior of republican institutions, the association decided on three lines of action:

“1. Information can be obtained from every county in the State of the numbers and condition of primary schools, the time for which they are taught in a year, the average number of scholars that attend, the branches taught, the books received, and the mode of instruction pursued, the cost for each school, or even for each scholar, the probable number of children who ought to receive aid from public funds, and many other particulars relative to the present condition of the primary schools of this State.”

“2. Correspondence with public institutions and individuals in other states would furnish legislative documents relative to school statistics, plans of operation, application of public funds, qualifications of teachers, and the branches taught in different parts of the country, the various results of public and private munificence, and many other facts.”

“3. Through the channels of the press, and by public addresses, information may be thrown before the public.”<sup>6</sup>

The literature of the time carried this notice and these questions relative to the first plan of the association in which a survey of the primary educational status of the State was to be made:

“Friends of education, teachers and preachers of the gospel throughout the State are requested to correspond with

<sup>5</sup> Sen. Rep. on Educ., Doc. No. 8, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> State Supt. Rep., 1885-6, p. 110.

John Russell, Esq., Postmaster, Bluffdale, Greene County, and to furnish such information as may be in their power on the topics involved in the following questions. The information of ladies as well as gentlemen is requested. And gentlemen out of the State are solicited to furnish the Institute with such facts and documents as may be needed, to be addressed to J. M. Peck, Postmaster, Rock Spring, St. Clair County.

1. What kind of a schoolhouse have you? 2. How many months in a year is school taught? 3. What is the cost of your school per annum, including pay of teacher, books, fuel, and repairs of schoolhouse? 4. What is the cost per scholar? 5. How many different scholars attend? 6. What is the average number of scholars? 7. How many children need aid from public funds. 8. How many schools in the county? 9. What branches are taught in your schools? 10. What books are used in spelling? In reading? In arithmetic? In geography? In grammar? 11. Are the elements of natural history taught? 12. Does your teacher lecture the scholars on the branches of science? 13. Does he ask questions on every reading lesson? 14. How many adults in your settlement who cannot read? 15. Have you a public library, and if so, how large, and under what regulations? 16. Could not a small library of useful books be had for the use of your school, and loaned to the scholars as rewards for proficiency in study, and good behavior? 17. Would you like to have a good teacher permanently settled with you, and would the school support him? 18. How would a circuit teacher do who should conduct four or five schools, visiting them once a week as teachers of singing do, and lecturing and explaining the branches taught? 19. What measures, in your opinion, or those of the people around you should the State adopt in relation to school funds? 20. Can you get up meetings of the people on court day, or any other convenient time, on the subject of education? 21. Will any gentleman make public addresses, or deliver lectures to the people on the subject of education and schools? 22. What proportions of the families take newspapers, or any other periodical?"

The information contained in these questions became the subject matter for the second meeting of the Illinois Institute,

<sup>7</sup> State Supt. Rep., 1885-6, p. 111.

convened in December, 1834, at Vandalia, at the same time and place as the General Assembly. The deliberations of the educational convention were formulated in an address to the people of Illinois, and in a memorial to the legislature.

"A well devised system of primary schools will secure to their families increased prosperity and happiness to their country, wealth, glory and freedom."<sup>8</sup> The means of providing common free education were stated in three ways: 1. Massachusetts had a policy of taxation exclusively; 2. Connecticut had the interest from a vested fund; 3. New York had the combination of the first and second plan—a tax and the interest on a vested fund. These three plans were concretely described and the position of Illinois in comparison was found most favorable, the New York plan being recommended.

But the whole heart of the system to be established, said the address, rested on the teacher who must be trained in special schools. "One of the great defects in the common schools of New England and New York is the incompetency of their teachers. \* \* \* A child under competent instruction will acquire as much learning in three years, as is commonly attained in six under existing teaching, and hence, it is the interest of the people to employ skillful instructors. Would you trust the shoeing of your horse to any but a smith? You would not. Then we pray you by your parental affections, to pause, before you commit the education of your infant and immortal children, into the hands of men, ignorant of the laws of physics, and totally unused in the operation of the human intellect. If the blacksmith should learn his trade, surely the school teacher should study his profession."<sup>9</sup>

The Institute recommended to the legislature, in accordance with those ideas, the following principles to be established by law: 1. The citizens of a community shall elect their trustees and teacher and a majority of the citizens of a district may petition the county commissioner's court to lay off a school district. 2. "The teacher shall be required to keep a schedule, exhibiting the names and number of scholars, and the number of days that they respectively attend school,

---

<sup>8</sup> State Supt. Rep., 1885-6, p. 117.

<sup>9</sup> State Supt. Rep., 1885-6, p. 119.



and that all the funds distributed by the laws of the State for payment of teachers' wages, be apportioned according to the whole number of days which all the children shall have attended school, as shall appear from a copy of said schedule made out and sworn to by the teacher, and approved by the trustees of the school."<sup>10</sup>

3. The interest of the college and seminary fund should be loaned to the common school fund, but preserving the integrity of the former for future use. The interests of the State shall be better served by sectional seminaries rather than by one central institution.

4. The distribution of the interest from the school fund shall be made by the county school commissioner of each county on the basis of population, according to the last census.

5. The distributive share of each county shall be used for the payment of teachers' salaries.

6. "The State shall contribute an annual sum to the support of at least one respectable academy in each county, when the people thereof shall have first put the same into actual operation."<sup>11</sup>

7. "Before any part of the money in the hands of the school commissioner be distributed by him for the support of the teacher, though citizens wishing to derive the benefits from it shall first erect and furnish a substantial and comfortable schoolhouse, agree to supply the same with necessary fuel, and engage to pay at least one-half of the wages of the teacher, and shall have a school taught at least three months."<sup>11</sup>

The result of the recommendations of the State Teacher's Association was the proposal of a system of education, made in the Senate, Feb. 5, 1835, for a uniform system of common schools and county seminaries throughout the State.

The bill of 1835 had some very interesting and unique features, among which, were those that related to the creation of county seminaries. Those institutions were to be organized as public joint stock companies which have been described in Chapter III. After three months of operation, the

<sup>10</sup> State Supt. Rep. 1885-6, p. 121.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 121.

State was required to pay annually to each seminary the sum of two hundred dollars. In turn, the State required those who expected to teach to sign a contract with the trustees of the seminary to teach in the county twice as long as the term required for qualification. Moreover, the commissioner of the seminary fund was authorized to pay to the trustees of these academies, the tuition of all persons who were qualifying themselves to teach.

Like the law of 1825, this bill made common schools free to all white children. As the law of 1825 was repealed, so the unusual provision for taxation in the bill of 1835 was defeated. The State was unready to assume the burden of educating its children and training its teachers free.

New York was still paying tuition for the education of its common school children. Pennsylvania passed a free school law in 1834-5, which caused a great deal of opposition in the legislature and in the State. Ohio and Indiana were struggling along with no common school system provided. The entire country still had some vestiges of the colonial system of apprenticeship education.

It is true, that nearly twenty-five years passed before the establishment of a normal school in Illinois. However, in 1835, scarcely a teacher training institution existed in the whole country. One of the new educational doctrines of the day was the professional training of teachers. Men like Stowe, who had gone to Europe to study the Prussian school system, advocated teacher training. If the older states were unready to establish normal schools, even as private ventures, Illinois should not be censured for failing to adopt that part of the bill providing for the establishment of county seminaries. Those institutions would, in all probability, have been doomed to failure.

The academies already organized, both public and private, did the best they could to educate teachers for the common schools. It is unlikely, however, that any academic institution provided more than a narrow scholastic education for prospective teachers, although the charters of some institutions stated that the qualification of teachers was one of their objects. The published programs of studies showed no professional subjects in the academic curricula. A thorough

preparation in reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic, with an attempted mastery of the classic languages, was considered sufficient preparation for those who were to teach in the primary schools.

In fact, nearly anyone with a little training in the elementary subjects was thought capable of teaching. Here and there was an occasional objection by some fairly capable judge to the work of teachers in the common schools. Thus a writer in the *Warsaw Signal* believed that some teachers were careless, indolent, ignorant and without the least desire to find out what was expected of them. "Teachers are frail mortals, as well as the rest of us; and some of them, I may say with truth, a little more frail than their employers. I conceive it to be one of the worst evils of our system, that it has a tendency to make teachers careless, and indolent; and it has been operating so long, that many of them do not seem to care whether they do their duty or not; and any number of them in my opinion, do not even go to the trouble of inquiring what their duty is. I only make these remarks that they may do good, if so be where there is good to be done, that whosoever the shoe pinches may wear it."<sup>12</sup>

An extremely severe, and probably just indictment of the common school teacher of the State was that given by one of its educational leaders. The first common school journal of Illinois, published in 1837, had but one year's existence because the teachers were unable to understand its methods and because of the little interest in primary education. "We apprehend there is not sufficient intelligence among the mass of teachers in the State to appreciate the merits of such a work, nor interest enough taken by parents in the success of common schools, or in the education of their children, to induce them to extend, at the present time, an adequate support to the enterprise."<sup>13</sup>

From our point of view, we could expect little of teachers because little was expected of them by the people. A circuit teacher was surely less efficient than a circuit preacher. Occasionally, a circuit teacher had as many as three schools to teach, as well as supply the books. However, that method

<sup>12</sup> *Warsaw Signal*, Feb. 2, 1842.

<sup>13</sup> *Ill. Hist. Col.*, v. 6, p. 63.

had its adherents who stated the advantages in no uncertain terms. "First. Two neighborhoods, unable to support a school separately, can, by uniting with each other, enjoy all the benefits of a common country school."

"Second. One teacher can, on this plan accommodate two settlements at the same time; and this is no small advantage when good teachers are so few and far between."

"Third. By reducing the cost of tuition nearly one-half, poor people who have large families can give them such an education as will fit them for occupying a respectable station in society."

"Fourth. Those whose children are large enough to be of service to them either on the farm or in the house, can, on this plan, have them at home nearly half the time, employed in useful occupations, and acquiring steady and industrious habits, without which the health of the body, as well as the health of the mind, is destroyed."<sup>14</sup>

Another picture of the teacher and the school, as well as the community, emphasized the lack of schools, the meager education provided, the insecurity of tenure and pay, and consequently, unqualified teachers. "During the early history of Illinois, schools were almost unknown in some neighborhoods, and in the most favored districts, they were kept up solely by subscription, and only in the winter season, each subscriber agreeing to pay for one or more scholars, or stipulating to pay for his children pro rata for the number of days they should be in attendance. The teacher usually drew up articles of agreement, which stipulated that the school should commence when a specified number of scholars should be subscribed, at the rate of \$2, \$2.50, or \$3 per scholar for the quarter. In these written articles, he bound himself to teach spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic, as far as the double rule of three. Occasionally, a teacher would venture to include English grammar. But in the earlier years of my youth, I knew of no teacher who attempted to give instruction in grammar or geography. And such branches of history, natural philosophy, or astronomy, were not thought of. Many parents were unwilling that their children should study arithmetic, contending that it was quite unnecessary for farmers,

---

<sup>14</sup> State Supt. Rep., 1885-6, p. 114.



and what was the use of grammar to a person who could talk so as to be understood by everybody?"<sup>15</sup>

With scarce and inefficient schools, with little or no legal requirements for certification, and with no adequate provision for the training of teachers, went low salaries. Sometimes the teacher was to "board round," or live with the patrons, in turn. Tuition for each pupil was charged, varying in amount from district to district, but it was used chiefly to pay the teacher. Once in a while, a widow was exempted from her share of the payment of the teacher's wages beyond her part of the common school fund. The law of 1825 made it legal for a teacher to receive produce instead of money.<sup>16</sup>

Between 1844 and 1846, the highest wage for men ranged from \$17 to \$30 per month; the lowest, from \$6 to \$12, the average being about \$15; the highest wage for women ranged from \$9 to \$17.56 per month, the lowest, from \$3 to \$6, the average being about \$10.<sup>17</sup> No statement was made as to whether these wages were exclusive or inclusive of board and lodging. In some instances, it is known, when this calculation was made by the ex-officio State Superintendent, that teachers paid their own board and lodging, in others, they did not.

Illinois, at any rate, ranked among the highest states in the payment of teachers' salaries if the statistics of Horace Mann in the *Prairie Farmer* in 1848 were reliable: "Salaries of teachers per month exclusive of board and room:

Maine .....	\$15.40,	males,	\$ 4.80,	females	
New Hampshire .....	13.50,	"	5.65,	"	
Vermont .....	12.00,	"	4.75,	"	
New York .....	14.96,	"	6.69,	"	
Pennsylvania .....	17.02,	"	10.09,	"	
Ohio .....	15.42,	"	8.73,	"	
Indiana .....	12.00,	"	6.00,	"	
Massachusetts .....	24.51,	"	8.07,	"	'18

In spite of the continuous reaffirmation, by political candidates for office, of the value of common school education, the legislature passed few laws very far in advance of the

<sup>15</sup> Patterson, *Early Soc. in So. Ill.*, in *Fer. Hist. Ser.*, No. 14, p. 121.

<sup>16</sup> See *Contract of Allen Parlier* in Chap. VIII.

<sup>17</sup> *Senate and House Rep.*, 1846, p. 185.

<sup>18</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, 1848, v. 8, p. 222.

general level of intelligence of the people in the State. However, attention was focused on desirable laws though they were to be enacted in the future, by the indefatigable labor of the State Educational Association. The men of that body, at once and clearly, saw the necessity for trained teachers to conduct the schools. But the people were not to blame for failing to see the value of an entirely new educational doctrine, new, even to the older states, when scarcely any system of common schools was in operation. The low salaries, the inefficient teachers, and the inadequate schools, were partly the product of a frontier civilization, but also the result of the low educational conditions in the states from which they emigrated.

## CHAPTER X.

*Some Agencies that Aided in the Development and the Establishment of the Common School.*

The common school system of Illinois, when the permanent free school law was passed, in 1855, was the product of more than a quarter of a century of development. In considering farther the internal evolution of the system itself, let us examine the means by which the people of the State were taught to accept the principle that the State should educate its children. In general, democracy was just beginning to grow, and becoming conscious of its power. Humanitarian ideals, doing something for the other man's children, were for the first time, a national characteristic. Though the period from 1830 to 1865 was marked by many abuses in educational practice, the mass of the people were learning for the first time the advantages of a universal system of free common schools. Illinois had many agencies which contributed to the growth of that ideal.

Usually, in a frontier community, moral and educational values are first determined, by the championship of individual leaders. More settled life develops group leadership, not separate from, but existing along with prominent leaders, and institutions emerge with their own ends in view. Through the influence of educational leaders, the writings of newspapers and magazines, the work of institutions such as the Sunday schools and public libraries, and educational conventions, the development of the free school was hastened. Our next consideration, therefore, is a study of the part taken by these agencies.

*Educational Leaders.*

Governors of the State of Illinois, in the period we are considering, from first to last, took the lead in calling the attention of the general assembly to the necessity for, and the needs of the common schools. Governor Bond, the first in

office after the State was admitted into the Union, in 1818, recommended that township trustees lease the school lands, using the rent for educational purposes. Besides, a certain per centum of the sales of all public lands should be reserved for the use of schools, both of which incomes would be sufficiently large to educate the children of the state to the remotest period of time.<sup>1</sup>

We have described the activity of Governor Coles relative to the question of slavery and the free school law of 1825. With the many other recommendations to the legislature, Governor Coles spoke of the proper preservation of the public lands in the State as a means for the education of future generations. "But, from the present super-abundance of lands, these will not be productive of much revenue for many years to come; they should, however, be strictly husbanded as a rich source from which to supply future generations with the means of education." (Now followed his suggestions which resulted in the free school law of 1825). "In the meantime, would it not be wise to make legal provision to assist in the support of local schools?"<sup>2</sup>

Whether or not Coles or Duncan wrote the law of 1825, both men were champions of the common schools. The latter, in following Coles as chief executive, continued to advise the legislature of the value of common schools, of the necessity for the adoption of some scheme of government support for education, and of the wisdom in preserving the now small fund for future use. "As every country is prosperous and respected in proportion to the virtue and intelligence of its inhabitants, the subject of education will doubtless again form an important part of your deliberations. It becomes us to use every exertion in our power to instruct those who are immediately dependent upon us, and least to those who come after us the rich revenues to be derived from land, canals, and other improvements; to form a permanent fund to carry out any plan you may adopt for the purposes of education. A government like ours carried on by the will of the people, should be careful to use all the means in its power to enlighten the minds of those who are destined to exercise so important a trust. This and every consideration connected

<sup>1</sup> Niles Weekly Register, v. 15, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> Sen. Jr., 1824-5, p. 19.



with the virtue, elevation and happiness of man, and the character and prosperity of our State, and of our common country calls upon you to establish some permanent system of common schools by which an education may be placed within the power, nay, if possible secured to every child in the State.”<sup>2</sup>

The governors above mentioned exemplified the part taken by the chief executives in support of education. We shall speak in another connection of those who assisted the passage of the free school law of 1855. But no less influential in moulding the common schools of the national period were the preachers, writers, lawyers and the professional classes generally.

Were one to select the man whose efforts were the greatest for the moral and educational uplift of the people, it would be Rev. J. M. Peck. The organization of the Rock Spring Seminary was but one of his many-sided activities. Sunday schools, through which the common children and many of the older people learned to read and write were first developed by this missionary preacher. Peck was found at every important gathering, legislative, agricultural, religious and educational, urging the creation of a system of schools for the common people. Through him, a public meeting, assembled in the state house at Vandalia to hear an address by Judge Hall on education, became the nucleus of the first state teachers' association. He was acquainted with the best in the New England schools, and knew how to impart that knowledge to others, either in his horseback rides over the State with backwoodsmen, or in legislative halls with governors and political leaders. In him, the common man's children, as well as the children of the elite, had a lifelong friend. The passage of the first permanent free school law in the State was a fitting tribute to him, who had spent more than a quarter of a century for the cause of education in the State of Illinois.

The New England and eastern settlers in Illinois were distinguished by their championship of the cause of free common school education. Jonathan B. Turner, a teacher in Illinois College, spent the prime of his life, 1834-55, for the cause of the education of the common people, although he is

---

<sup>2</sup> Sen. Jr., 1834-5.

better known for his service in the advocacy of and the establishment of the University of Illinois. Conventions were organized, addresses were made, and letters and pamphlets were written by Turner, advocating the establishment of the common school by co-operation, and the unity of the educational forces of the State. A letter to his fiancée showed that he went about the State working for the common school:

“Soon after writing my last, I determined to spend my vacation in looking into the state of common schools in Illinois. I have been absent about seven weeks, have passed through some dozen or fifteen counties and delivered public addresses in all the county seats and principal villages.”

“The result is that in all the counties I have visited, and many others to which I have written, they have resolved to call county meetings and elect delegates to the State Convention to be held at Vandalia next December to discuss the subject of common schools, and lay the subject before the people and Legislature. My success has been better than I expected, and I hope great good will result.”<sup>4</sup>

Another statement represented some of the things that Turner said in his addresses to the people on the subject of common schools: “While others are still contesting the boundaries of human freedom and adjusting the restraints of human depravity, we would give unlimited scope to the one by exterminating the other from the face of the earth. With these ends in view, it devolves on us to augment the facilities, the resources and the completion of knowledge, until a royal road shall be paved from the threshold of every cabin in the land to the open doors and waiting honors of our most magnificent temples of science. If by council, concert, and co-operation, we concentrate our energies and husband our resources to the utmost, who can over-estimate the final result? But if we fling the experience of the past and the advantages of the present to the winds, and each for himself resolves in his own solitary career of experiment and effort,—beleaguering and jading the public mind, and exhausting the public resources with our own isolated and selfish schemes—what a fearful retribution awaits both of us and those who are to come after us.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Life of Jonathan Baldwin Turner*, p. 70.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

The whole group of Illinois College men and their associates—Edward Beecher, Julian M. Sturtevant, Truman M. Post, Theron Baldwin, William Kirby, Samuel Adams, Elisha Jenney, Asa Turner, John F. Brooks, Samuel D. Lockwood, J. M. Ellis, Albert Hale and William Brown—were devoted advocates of the common school. The welfare of the State and the happiness of the people depended not only on the advancement of education, but these men also saw that the cause of higher learning was destined to be founded on a common public school system.

Notices of the work done in the advancement of education by some of these men appeared in the newspapers of that day: "At the commencement in Jacksonville, Aug. 21, 1833, an address on Common Schools, by Rev. Theron Baldwin." "Thursday evening, Nov. 13, 1834, an address in Springfield by Prof. J. B. Turner, Subject: Common Schools." "Lecture on Education by Rev. Mr. Baldwin at Mt. Carmel, Wabash County, August, 1836." "A lecture by Prof. Sturtevant in Springfield, 1843, in behalf of a State Superintendent. Lecture repeated before the legislature the next night." "The annual commencement of Jacksonville College Sept. 21, 1836. N. B.—A convention of teachers will be held on the afternoon of the preceding day to concert measures for the cause of education in this state."<sup>6</sup>

Judge Hall, the foremost literary writer of the State up to the time of his removal to Cincinnati, in 1833, advocated public education in his addresses and writings. Theron Baldwin, with other Illinois College men, took up the cause of education in their editorship of the *Common School Advocate*. John S. Wright of Chicago, built a common school in 1835 in Chicago, at his own expense; edited the *Prairie Farmer*, a journal devoted to agriculture, mechanic arts, and common schools, and took an active part in the creation of educational laws. Charles E. Hovey, the first editor of the *Illinois Teacher*, the president of the State Teachers' Association, principal of the public schools of Peoria, and head of the Normal School established in 1857, performed a distinguished service in organizing and uniting the teachers of the State in the cause of free public schools.

---

<sup>6</sup> State Supt. Report, 1885-6, p. 123.

Besides the editors just mentioned, the missionary circuit riders and state religious agents seldom failed to lend their influence for the enlightenment of the children of the State. Lemuel Foster, appointed in 1832 as a missionary to Illinois, built an academy in Jacksonville and one in Bloomington where common, as well as academic instruction was given; established Sunday schools in the surrounding country and interviewed his constituents for the purpose of gaining their support for public instruction. John F. Brooks, sent to St. Clair county, opened one of the first teachers' seminaries in Waverley, in 1837, directed the Springfield Academy in 1840, and acted as principal of the public schools in the same city. Other typical religious leaders were Romulus Barnes, Flavel Bascom, Aratus Kent, Peter Cartwright and Hubbel Loomis.

The work of the state superintendents and legislators in securing laws for the organization of free schools should not be overlooked. Mr. Gatewood was named in the last chapter and an extract of his address was given to show what he, as chairman of the Senate Educational Committee, thought were the reasons for developing common schools. S. W. Moulton, to whom the free school bill was entrusted, in the legislature in 1854, spent several years after the passage of the law in writing articles and giving addresses on the justification of taxation for the support of schools, and the manner in which the distribution of revenue for school purposes should take place. N. W. Edwards spent much time in gathering statistics to show the condition of the schools of the State. As superintendent, he visited every county and gave addresses urging the creation of free schools. Moreover, the legislature required that he prepare a bill for the reorganization of the entire school system. A state agent was appointed by the State Teachers' Association to travel over the State in the interest of free schools. His first report indicated the nature of his work:

He visited twenty-one schools and delivered sixteen evening addresses the first month. "At Hennepin, I found a new and beautiful edifice, erected at a cost of seven thousand dollars, for a private school, and labored, not without hope of success, to induce the people to obtain it and establish therein



a graded free school. At Kewanee, it was attempted to show that the true interests of Wethersfield and Kewanee, adjacent districts, would be promoted by purchasing the seminary building located midway between them, and organizing in it a Central High School. The stock-holders proposed to give the six thousand dollars already expended, if the two districts would assume the indebtedness—two thousand dollars. The proposition was well received, and has since been adopted. They will soon rejoice in the possession of a first class High School, free to all whose attainments entitle them to admission.”<sup>7</sup>

Men of national prominence in other states were also influential in the development of the school system of Illinois. The ideas of Jefferson were foremost in the law of 1825. DeWitt Clinton was a leader, in the state of New York, in creating a common school system. But his addresses appeared in the Illinois papers, of which the following is a typical extract: “The great bulwark of a republican government, is the cultivation of education; for the right of suffrage cannot be exercised in a salutary manner without intelligence. Ten years of a child’s life, from five to fifteen, may be spent in a common school, and ought this immense portion of time to be absorbed in learning what can be acquired in a short period? Perhaps one-fourth of our population is annually instructed in our common schools, and ought the minds and the morals of the rising, and perhaps the destinies of all future generations, to be entrusted to the guardianship of incompetence? The scale of instruction must be elevated; the standard of education ought to be raised. Small and suitable collections of books and maps attached to our common schools, and periodical examinations to test the proficiency of scholars, and the merits of the teachers, are worthy of attention. When it is understood that objects of this description enter into the formation of our characters, control our destinies through life, protect the freedom and advance the glory of our country; and that this is the appropriate soil of liberty and education, that it be our pride, as it is our duty to spare no exertions, and to shrink from no expense, in the promotion of a cause consecrated by religion, and enjoined by patriotism.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Ill. Teach., v. 5, p. 90.

<sup>8</sup> Sang. Jr., Jan. 10, 1835.

Horace Mann's and Henry Barnard's reports dealing with the organization and establishment of a common school system, also were quoted in Illinois publications. Moreover, Mr. Barnard was on the program at two different common school conventions where he discussed the internal features of free schools.<sup>9</sup>

Any classification of some of the representative leaders is impossible because their interests were so many sided. An Illinois College founder like Baldwin was a missionary, who established Sunday schools, a preacher who advocated the cause of education before the legislature, and the principal of Monticello Seminary wherein some teachers were trained for the common schools. Moreover, he was an editor of one of the literary agencies for the promotion of education in the West.

*Literary Agencies.*

Only a little of the literary material of the period to 1850 has been preserved. In that which has survived, the subject of education continually appears. Many of the newspapers spread information about the schools of the State, inserted addresses from men like Governor Clinton, Horace Mann and Henry Barnard on education, summarized the reports of state superintendents of public instruction in such states as New York and Connecticut, and recommended the adoption of certain principles for the improvement of education in Illinois. As the creators of public opinion, and the means by which the knowledge of school practices was disseminated, many of the newspapers were preeminent.

The ideas attributed to Judge Hall, the first newspaper editor in the State, have come from the volumes of the Illinois Monthly Magazine, published at Vandalia, 1827 to 1830. That publication might well be called the first school journal of the State. Among other articles were those on the need for scientific instruction as opposed to an all-language curriculum; arguments for the creation of a state system of free common education; recommendations for the use of new and better text-books, and surveys of the educational means in existence. This magazine was too far in advance of the literary ability of the people on the frontier; hence it was necessary for the editor to remove to Cincinnati in the early thirties where the publication was continued.

<sup>9</sup> State Supt. Rep., 1885-6, p. 152.

However, in 1837, appeared the *Common School Advocate*, a monthly journal, printed at Jacksonville. A group of editors, probably Illinois College teachers, carried on the publication for a year without pay. Even the short existence of the paper, only twelve months, advanced the common school cause. The contents of the *Advocate* are indicated by the first editorial suggesting topics for contribution.

“Objects of education—different grades of it, and the kind adapted to this age. Teaching made a profession—benefits of it. Best method of teaching geography, arithmetic, grammar, reading, writing, etc. Common schools—their importance, etc. Necessity of well qualified teachers. Teachers’ seminaries. Government and discipline of a school. School books. Common school libraries and apparatus. Duties of parents, teachers and trustees. Location and structure of school houses. Systems of education in our own and other countries. Importance of universal education under free governments. Accounts of educational associations and conventions, or of particular schools. Facts respecting the state of education, particularly in Illinois. The system best adapted to our circumstances. Moral and religious education in schools. Connection between ignorance and crime—between intelligence and national prosperity.”<sup>10</sup>

But the most influential school journal, until the appearance of the *Illinois Teacher*, in 1854, was the *Prairie Farmer*, issued as the *Union Agriculturist* from 1841 to 1843. The title page, among other things, said it was a journal dedicated to the cause of the common schools in Illinois. Without its record, the story of the struggle for free education in the period from 1841 to 1854, would be almost impossible of reproduction. Such articles as these were discussed in its pages: the need for a normal school; the necessity for trained teachers; the criminal negligence in not providing decent common school buildings; reports of the ex-officio state superintendent of common schools; proceedings of educational conventions, both state and county; arguments against select schools and private academies; the reasons for free schools; the subjects taught in the free schools; reports of the New England and New York common schools; advantages of a State superintendent; gradation as a means of improvement

<sup>10</sup> State Supt. Report, 1885-6, p. 133.

in the educational system; desirable school legislation, and school statistics.

The cause of the farmer was the cause of the common school. The readers of the *Prairie Farmer*, besides learning about agriculture and mechanic arts, were being educated in the cause of free schools, so that the passage and adoption of the free school law of 1855 was possible. Moreover, this journal had the unique distinction and advantage of reaching the patrons of the schools rather than being a journal read by the teachers only.

Last, but by no means least, was the *Illinois Teacher*, founded in the interests of education, in 1854. Established about a year before the passage of the first permanent free school law, this journal became a means, primarily, of helping develop the free schools. Methods of teaching the subjects in the curriculum were discussed in each number from year to year. Educational news in the way of promotions, increases in salary, and the employment and marriage of teachers appeared. The proceedings of educational conventions; digests of school law; controversies over which section of the State was more enlightened—"Egypt," or the North; reasons for gradation with the explanation of its meaning; reports from the State agent travelling in the interests of the establishment of free schools; notices of the creation of high schools and suggested curricula for them were a few of the many subjects treated.

The teachers, especially, were made conscious of many of the problems raised by the beginning of free schools. Also, were the teachers benefited by the experiences of others through the medium of the first relatively permanent professional journal. The support of the *Illinois Teacher* by the profession itself signified, for the first time, a unity of action and a group consciousness of the teachers themselves. With that power back of the free schools, progress became possible.

*Institutions Whose Objects Indirectly Aided Common School Education.*

Prominent among the organizations for the aid of the common schools, was the Ladies' Association for the Education of Females, established at Jacksonville, Oct. 4, 1833, "the principal object of which shall be to encourage and assist



young ladies to qualify themselves for teaching, and aid in supporting teachers in those places where they cannot otherwise be sustained.”<sup>11</sup>

“The plan was liberal and simple. The principle object was to educate teachers, but no pledges were exacted; no attempt to decide where or how the individual could be most useful. The great object was to instruct and elevate the human mind for its own sake, and in the belief that a mind rightly educated will not fail to enlighten others”<sup>11</sup>

The fifth annual report of this association advertised schools where prospective teachers could receive training. Such were in Fulton, Morgan, Greene, Madison, Macoupin, Bond, Pike, Putnam, Knox, McLean and LaSalle counties. Moreover, auxiliary associations had been formed in Chicago, Ottawa, Farmington, Peoria, Springfield, Alton, Upper Alton, Rushville, Carlinville, Galena, Griggsville, Quincy, Fairfield, Hadley, Warsaw, Carlyle, Augusta, Knoxville, Bloomington, Jacksonville, Carrollton, Manchester, Canton, Waverly, Winchester, Jerseyville, Beardstown, and Joliet.<sup>12</sup>

The power of the association is seen in that twelve hundred young women were assisted in receiving an education, many of whom became teachers in the common schools, with \$25,091.35 expended for that purpose. The Illinois Teacher described the work, purposes and aims of the organization thus: “With none of the pomp and e’clat which herald the movements of other institutions, it has gone steadily on in its benign mission” \* \* \* educating young ladies, “who else must have been forever denied the blessings of liberal culture, have been sent forth to be angels of mercy and joy to many hearts and homes, in this and other lands. This is not the language of mere eulogy; we have watched the progress of this society from its foundation; we know the ladies who are and have been its officers and friends; we know its struggles and labors, and we know its fruits. We cannot better express our opinion of its history and character than in the touching and eloquent words of one of its founders:”

“Silent, catholic, economical and persevering; it has been so Christ-like in its labors that the world has never known and could not stop to read its history. Its anniversaries have

<sup>11</sup> 5th An. Rep Lad. Assoc.

<sup>12</sup> 5th An. Rep Lad. Assoc.

been simple exponents of an institution partaking so little of the spirit of the world. No noise, or parade, but a plain statement of its labor, expenditures, and successes. Its history is written in the heart of many a missionary, toiling in obscure indigence; it is written, too, in the heart of the orphan and the poor, who by timely aid have been able to break the fetters by which poverty held back their aspirations for knowledge; it will be read in the ages to come, in the light of heaven."<sup>13</sup>

This association mainly educated poor girls, many of whom found their way as teachers into the common schools. A better class of teachers was thus provided than would have been without the work of this association.

Workingmen's organizations, in the absence of common schools, provided education for the youth of their districts. Even the Mechanics' Union of Springfield advertised that its school was the free public school of the city. These associations helped focus the attention of the people on the need for, and the absence of, a free school system. Newspapers commented upon the worthy purposes of the workmen, and advertised, in the news sections of the paper, the rates of tuition, the curricula and the objects. One association stated its aims in these words:

"The Springfield Mechanics' Union is established for the creation of a common school, and a public library, and for the promotion of literature, science, and the mechanic arts;"<sup>14</sup> Other purposes were stated but they are not related to the subject of education. Similarly, the Mechanics' Union of Chicago said that its object was to diffuse knowledge and information throughout the mechanic classes, to found lectures on natural, mechanical and chemical philosophy, and other scientific subjects; to create a library and a museum for the benefit of others, and to establish schools for the benefit of their children.

The movement for the education of the children of the working men was general in the period from 1830 to 1865. Common schools were established in the principal cities throughout the East and the middle West. Many of the Mechanics Institutes in the older cities today, owe their origin to

<sup>13</sup> Ill. Teach., v. 4, p. 286.

<sup>14</sup> Sess. Laws, 1839-40, p. 74.

this period in which labor organizations established schools in the absence of a free common school system. Through that experience, the public was gradually learning the value of, and how free schools should be established.

General education, by whatever means, had a decisive influence in making it possible for the creation of universal free education. The emancipation of the mind of men and women from ignorance gave them the taste for the education that ought to be provided for their children. Another means, therefore, by which older people were educated was the public library. These, indeed, assisted the establishment of a common school system by showing the merits of education.

Public libraries were formed as joint stock companies in several towns. The county commissioners' record of Edwards county, 1815 to 1832, had the names of twelve stockholders who subscribed 97 of the 300 shares for the creation of a public library; whereupon the contract was let to John Robinson for the erection of a library building to cost \$1,800.

This building was used for public meetings, a house of worship and a library. "A good market house, and a public library is at the end, in which a kind of Unitarian worship is held on Sunday, when a sermon and church service, purified, is read by any one who pleases. The books are donations from the Flower family, and their friends in England."<sup>15</sup> "They have a library, and much attention appears to be paid to the cultivation of the mind as well as the soil."<sup>16</sup>

Edwardsville made a similarly early start in the foundation of a library by buying books from Boston. "It will, no doubt, be gratifying to the proprietors of this institution to know that the books lately ordered from Boston have arrived. Those subscribers, who are in arrears, it is hoped, will come forward and by paying up, entitle themselves and others to use one of the best collections of books in the country."<sup>17</sup> The catalogue of books, which were considered the masterpieces of literature, appeared in the same issue of the *Spectator* as the above quotation.

The session laws have several of the articles of incorporation of public library associations in them. Other un-

<sup>15</sup> Faux Jr., p. 253, Thwaites, v. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Niles Reg., v. 19, p. 368.

<sup>17</sup> Spec., Aug. 7, 1819.

incorporated organizations were also formed, both of which served as a means of public enlightenment. Usually, the membership fee was low enough for all to join, perhaps one dollar a year, and the people were requested to make use of the books.

“The trustees of the Warsaw Library Association take pleasure in informing the stockholders of the institution that they have procured the railroad office for their use, and that they are fitting up in connection with it a Reading Room, which will be open in a few days, well supplied with newspapers. The room will be open each day (Sunday excepted) after the hour of five o’clock, P. M., at which time stockholders wishing to receive or exchange books, will be waited upon by the librarian for that purpose. Ladies and gentlemen of the village, and strangers sojourning among us, are respectfully invited to use it.”<sup>18</sup>

A second means of promoting the general intelligence were the academies. More direct connection between the semi-public seminaries and the common schools existed than at first might be suspected. The principals and teachers of many of the former institutions were leaders in the educational thought of the State. Those men and women held their positions because of their ability, and the trust placed in them by the public. Active in the councils of the state, and county associations, those men took every occasion to promote free education. Indeed, they appeared before the general assembly in the interests of the common schools, as well as in the interests of the academies. Finally, they were intelligent and generous enough to believe that the hope of higher learning lay in the creation of a free school system.

Moreover, both public and private academies provided much of the common school education of the time. In the charters of the former, a stipulation usually was made which required or provided that the academies conduct common schools. The following quotation is an example of the relationship between the academy and the common school: “Sec. 9. There shall also be attached to the said academy, a department in which shall be taught branches that are usually taught in the common schools of the district in which

---

<sup>18</sup> Warsaw Signal, May 26, 1841.



said academy may be situated; and the said trustees of said academy, shall receive from the school commissioner of the county, the same amount of money in the same proportion, and apply the same to such tuition in the same manner as other common schools are paid and kept; Provided, that the teachers or instructors, of said department shall be selected by the trustees and under the control of the by-laws of said corporation.”<sup>19</sup>

But the share of the common school fund that the academies received for maintaining a common school was not sufficient to pay the expenses of a very long term. The result was that the academies charged their common school pupils tuition at a little lower rate than was received for the higher branches, or reduced the tuition of all subjects by the amount that they expected to receive from the school fund, or kept the rate of tuition as high as possible, even when they received their share of public money, because there was no authority that required a standard rate of tuition.

Nevertheless, the proposed school bill of 1835 was an attempt by which one academy in each county of the State should be so regulated and supported as to be a direct benefit to the common school. Tuition for the graduates of the academy who were to be teachers in the common school, was to be paid by the State. At any rate, the academy and the common school were brought into a closer relation by some of the students of the former becoming teachers in the latter. The two institutions were again brought together, for the purpose of advancing the interests of the common schools, in the series of educational conventions that were held between 1833 and 1855. Before discussing the conventions, however, a study of the work of the sunday schools follows:

The Sunday school was very prominent in raising the level of general intelligence throughout the State. It had its origin in Europe, in the Wesleyan revival, beginning in 1738, and the humanitarian philosophy that just preceded the French Revolution. In England, the purpose was primarily concerned with the education of poor children, but independent of the church. On the other hand, in the United States, the first Sunday school, organized at Philadelphia in 1791,

---

<sup>19</sup> Sess. Laws, 1841, p. 7.

was established for the purpose of giving secular and religious instruction. It was the accepted province of the church to give religious education, and the connection between the common school and the church had been so close that the Sunday school developed as a church institution. On the secular side, the Sunday school provided rudimentary education for the lower classes in the older states, while all classes in the frontier western communities received the benefits of that well organized body.

After 1831, the Massachusetts Sunday School Union became a parent of smaller organizations in Illinois, while the Illinois State Sunday School Union, composed of members of the principal religious denominations in the State, organized branches in nearly every county and smaller auxiliary branches, both, through the help of state agents, intelligent and devoted citizens, resident clergy and circuit missionaries.

Rev. Theron Baldwin gave this account as an example of his work in establishing Sunday schools:

"The Sabbath School,—to establish which was among my first efforts here, commenced about the first of February with a good degree of interest \* \* \* It numbers a little more than one-hundred. The library books have been read, and these in connection with the exercises of the school have evidently done much already towards creating a thirst for knowledge on the part of the scholars. Of the one-hundred five who have entered the school, only thirty-seven could read. I have made particular efforts in the Sabbath School, from a firm conviction that the minister of Christ can spend a part of his energies, at least, in no other way to so great advantage." <sup>20</sup>

The following is an account of how Sunday schools were established: "It is often difficult to start a Sabbath school, there is so much ignorant prejudice and opposition. I have a way which does well, when many good efforts of another sort are lost. In my visiting about, I look out some house in the settlement where I intend to form a school,—and one can generally be obtained in one way or another—and then without giving a word of notice, for that would awaken and combine opposition, I fill my saddle-bags with books begging

---

<sup>20</sup> Home Miss., v. 2, p. 59.

what I can, buying what I cannot beg, (for it is against the rules of the S. S. Union to give books before a school is formed) get on my horse and ride around with them to each family in the settlement, talk over with them the whole matter of the Sabbath School, and its benefits, persuading the parents, showing my books and interesting the children, giving to each, on the condition of their attending school, such a book as would be needed in it, at the same time telling them where and when we would begin to meet. In this way, the careless and prejudiced, who would not stir a step to hear ever so many addresses on Sabbath Schools, become deeply interested.”<sup>21</sup>

Sunday schools were established as early, at least as 1821, for the settlers of Lebanon formed themselves into a society and built a house where a seminary, library, a debating club and a Sunday school were conducted. About a decade later the records show how extensively the system was established in every section. Peck estimated that 375 Sunday schools with 2000 teachers, 17,000 pupils and 2000 volumes in their libraries, were in existence in Illinois.<sup>22</sup>

Usually, two sessions were held on Sunday, in the morning and in the afternoon, where reading, writing and some very simple arithmetic were taught. The Bible, religious hymns and religious tracts were the principal texts. The youth, and occasionally their elders, were taught by the best educated men and women of the district and the local or circuit preacher opened or closed each session with an address to all.

These institutions made communities in several districts realize their educational deprivation which surrounded them with the result that in some instances, the Sunday school was continued as a permanent week-day school. Thus the inhabitants of Rushville first founded schools on Sunday, and then, “formed themselves into a School Association, for the purpose of keeping in operation a permanent school, to be taught by a competent instructor; of good moral and temperate habits.”<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Home Miss., vol. 2, p. 59.

<sup>22</sup> Peck, Gaz., p. 89.

<sup>23</sup> Home Miss., v. 2, p. 194.

In considering the literary agencies in Illinois, Judge Hall characterized the value of the Sunday schools in this manner: "We view these efforts with unmingled pleasure. Apart from the important religious bearing of the Sunday School system, we consider it the most powerful engine, that this creative age has produced, for diffusion of knowledge. Its adaptation to the wants of a new country is peculiar. It brings instruction within the reach of thousands who have not the means of procuring it through ordinary channels; disseminates education free of expense; scatters books far and wide over the country; creates a taste for reading, and habits of inquiry among the young; and by its social character exercises a most happy effect, in promoting kind feelings, and cordial intercourse in society."<sup>24</sup>

#### *Educational Conventions.*

The Vandalia conventions of 1833 and 1834 have been sufficiently discussed in the last chapter. However, those meetings were the first of a large number in the State and counties, to 1855. They created enthusiasm for the common schools; they brought the leaders and friends of education together, and made harmonious and concentrated effort possible.

The constitution of the Illinois State Education Society, organized at Springfield, Dec. 28, 1840, was an illustration of the purpose for which teachers' associations were founded: "The friends of education assembled in Springfield, believing that the perpetuity of our free institutions, and our political, social and moral well being, depend mainly on the general diffusion of knowledge among people; and that the wants of our rapidly increasing population strongly demands such an improvement in our common school system as will place the benefits of education within the reach of every citizen. \* \* \* Its object shall be to promote, by all laudable means, the diffusion of knowledge in regard to education; and, especially, to endeavor to render the system of common schools throughout the State as perfect as possible."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Ill. Mo. Mag., v. 2, p. 103.

<sup>25</sup> Sate Supt. Rep., 1885-6, p. 136.



From 1841 to the constitutional convention of 1847, much material was published on the creation of a State Superintendent of common schools. Petitions were circulated at the instance of educational associations, while editors of newspapers and journals urged their readers to sign. As a sample of the memorials sent to the legislature by teachers' organizations asking for the establishment of a superintendent of common schools, let us examine the one sent in 1841.

“Let a superintendent of common schools be appointed—a man of talents, and yet a laborious and self-denying man; one who would go into all the dark corners, as well as the bright spots of the State, and labor day in and day out for the improvement of our common schools. Such a man would be a great use, not only in awakening the public to the importance of education, but by collecting facts for the information of your honorable body and the people. He would associate with all classes of the community, from the cabin to the mansion—from the humble teacher of the humblest school to the most learned professor—and advise you of their feelings and views. He would note the practical operation of the system, and suggest for your consideration wherein it might be improved. He would (a matter of no mean moment to the success of the common school education) do much towards bringing about a steady and uniform administration of the law.

“Your memorialists would also suggest that, as a matter of economy, a man of established virtue—of much experience; one who is familiar with the habits and feelings of our people; a man whose mind is well disciplined—should be placed at the head of this department. The interests involved are so various, so momentous, that the best mind in the State should be set to watch over them. Should the right sort of a man be selected and paid out of the general school fund, he will save to the general and township funds, by looking after their interests (aside from all other benefits resulting from his labors), a sum at least equal to his salary.

“Your memorialists would also suggest, that if any regard is due to the experience and example of other states, who have found a superintendent necessary to the success of their efforts in behalf of common school education, you are

strongly urged thereby to appoint a superintendent of the State of Illinois.”<sup>26</sup>

The legislature, however, passed no law creating the superintendent of common schools. But the Peoria convention of 1844 took up the question again with the result that the Secretary of State was made ex-officio state superintendent of common schools.

A whole reorganization of the school system was demanded from the legislature by the Peoria meeting. Discussions and reports were made on the subjects of a board of education; a board of county superintendents; district trustees; school districts; town superintendents; the school fund; gradation, and taxation.

On the last point, the memorialists argued at great length to overcome the hostility of the legislature and the people they represented, to taxation. Even if schools should be supported by taxation, the State was deeply in debt and times were hard because the effects of the panic of 1837 had not passed. But the objection to a tax for the education of other people's children was natural. The following paragraphs illustrated the attitude of the Peoria convention:

“We come now to consider finally, the one great requisite of the proposed plan—taxation. Each of the other parts is considered essential, yet they are but the machinery to work this result. We come out frankly and boldly, and acknowledge the whole system, every effort is intended only as a means of allurements to draw the people into the grasp of this most awful monster—a school tax.”

“But start not back in alarm. After all he may not be so terrible as some have perhaps imagined. Used with skill and judgment, and no other power can accomplish what he will; no other can work such changes in your common schools, and it is in vain that we attempt to dispense with his services. All experience throughout the Union is in favor of his employment. We do not, however, propose coercing any to employ him, who prefer to let him alone. All we ask is to give those permission to use him who are so inclined; and others when they witness his subordination, and power to

---

<sup>26</sup> State Supt. Rep., 1885-6, p. 136.

work for the cause of education, will doubtless desire themselves to try his services''

'Our position is that taxation for the support of schools is wise and just, that it is in fact the only method by which the deficiency for defraying the expenses of popular education beyond that supplied by the public funds can be equalized amongst those who should pay it.'

The schools of the State, by the law of 1845, were permitted to receive a tax for their support provided it was levied by a vote of two-thirds majority in any district. The amount of tax, however, that could be levied in any way was not to exceed fifteen cents on the one hundred dollars.

Four agencies by which the common school was aided in its development, and in its establishment as a free public institution have been discussed. (1) Prominent educational leaders were: most of the governors, who were nobly assisted by the untiring labors of Peck; the Illinois College men; such editors as Judge Hall, John S. Wright, Charles E. Hovey; the missionary circuit riders and resident ministers; state superintendents; legislators; state agents; and a few nationally prominent men of other states in the persons of Jefferson, Clinton, Mann and Barnard. (2) Many of the newspapers of the State, the Illinois Monthly Magazine, the Common School Advocate, the Prairie Farmer, and the Illinois Teacher were the literary means devoted to the interests of the common schools. (3) Institutions that increased the general intelligence of the people and created a desire for better educational opportunities were, the Ladies' Aid Association for the Education of Females; workingmen's organizations, public libraries, Sunday schools and academies. (4) Enthusiasm, harmony, and cooperation among the friends of the common school in the cause of general enlightenment, were developed by educational conventions. An ex-officio state superintendent of common schools was created in the person of the Secretary of State upon the recommendation of the Peoria Convention. But the legislature only conceded the right to levy taxes for the support of schools when a two-thirds majority of the people of any district so decided. The next chapter shall show how the common schools were made free, and shall indicate what the attitude was toward them.

## CHAPTER XI.

*The Free School Law of 1855.*

The friends of education were not satisfied with halfway measures. If districts were allowed to decide whether a tax should be voted for the support of schools, there would be few free schools. As a result, agitation was continued by educational associations for the appointment of a state superintendent of common schools, separate from the Secretary of State, and a compulsory ad valorem property tax. Accordingly, the Chicago school convention in 1846, resolved, among other things, to make a survey of the State in order to determine the qualifications of teachers in the service of common schools, the condition of schoolhouses, what amount of money was raised in each district for the support of schools, what was the attitude of the people toward general property tax, and what sum was paid for tuition by subscription.<sup>1</sup>

The Springfield Teachers' Association in the same year took a little different course. They resolved "that a committee of five be appointed to report to the convention a plan for the organization of a State Education Society."<sup>2</sup> That society was immediately organized, and began to create auxiliaries in the counties of the State for the purpose of aiding common schools.

The discussions by members of all the conventions, since the first in 1833, had finally awakened the public to the need of a more adequate school system. The people had seen the necessity for the revision of the state constitution and had assembled in a constitutional convention in Springfield in 1847. The fundamental law of the State ought to recognize the all-important subject of a system of education. Accordingly, the convention appointed a large representative committee

<sup>1</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, v. 6, p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 7, p. 73.



to consider the subject. To them, petitions were pouring in, chiefly from the newer counties of the North and West, settled by Easterners. Represented in the list, were Livingston, Madison, Cass, DuPage, DeKalb, McLean, Knox, Fulton, Peoria, Mason, Brown, Winnebago, Carroll, Crawford, Rock Island, Marshall, Whiteside, Stephenson, Pike, McHenry, St. Clair, and Sangamon counties.

It was but natural, therefore, that a resolution was introduced in the constitutional convention for the creation of a state superintendent of common schools: "Believing that important measures are necessary to advance the cause of education, the basis of our republican form of government, and to elevate the moral standard of common schools, the only source from which most of our youth derive their education; therefore. Resolved, That an article be ingrafted into our state constitution creating the office of state superintendent of common schools, who shall be elected by the people and hold his office for the term of four years, and until his successor is elected and qualified, and receive the salary of \$—— whose duty it shall be to have the general superintendence of common schools in this state, and report the conditions of the same in a manner and as often as may be required by law."<sup>3</sup>

Next, a resolution was passed by the convention which provided for the support of schools by taxation and a superintendent to make the system effective: "Resolved, That the committee on education be instructed to consider and report as to the propriety of a constitutional provision for the security of the college, seminary, and common school funds from conversion or destruction by the legislature. Also, for the establishment of a system of common schools as well, by taxation combined with state funds, afford the means of education to every child in the state, and the appointment of a state superintendent, with an adequate salary, to give effect to such system."<sup>4</sup>

Whereupon, the educational committee of the constitutional convention introduced a bill, which passed the first reading, and which should become a part of the organic law of the State. By this, the legislature should create a free, uni-

<sup>3</sup> Jr. Const. Conv., p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

versal system of common schools, at the head of which should be a state superintendent, appointed by the governor for a term of two years.

"Sec. 3. It shall be the duty of the General Assembly to provide for a system of common schools, which shall be as nearly uniform as may be throughout the State, and such common schools shall be equally free to all the children in the State, and no sectarian instruction shall be permitted in any of them."<sup>5</sup>

"Sec. 4. The superintendency of public instruction in this State shall be vested in an officer to be styled 'the superintendent of common schools,' and such county and local superintendents as may be established by law."<sup>6</sup>

"Sec. 5. At the first session of the General Assembly after the adoption of this constitution and biennially thereafter, it shall be the duty of the governor, by and with the advice and consent of the senate (a majority of all members elected thereto concurring therein), to appoint a superintendent of common schools, who shall hold his office for the term of two years and shall perform such duties and receive such salary as the General Assembly shall prescribe."<sup>6</sup>

After so much discussion in the constitutional convention of the establishment of a free school system with its proper officers, the constitution of 1847 is singularly silent on educational provisions.

Nevertheless, the common school leaders in the State kept right on trying "to erect upon a permanent basis a plain, practical system of Free Common Schools. The great fundamental principle of this action should be, that our schools be free to every child (native or adopted) in Illinois, free as the genial showers and sunshine of heaven."<sup>7</sup>

The State Educational Society authorized the publication of a magazine, the *Illinois Teacher*, devoted to the cause of common schools and resolved, "That the property of the State should be taxed to educate the children of the State."<sup>8</sup>

The same attitude toward taxation was shown by some of the educational associations of the northern and western

<sup>5</sup> Jr. Const. Conv., p. 352.

<sup>6</sup> Jr. Const. Conv., p. 352.

<sup>7</sup> State Supt. Rep., 1885-86, p. 166.

<sup>8</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, v. 8, p. 81.

counties, a typical resolution from which is this: "Resolved, That Common Schools should be free to all, both black and white, and being thus free and accessible to the poor as well as the rich, neither rich nor poor should be allowed to deprive their children of the means of a Good Common School Education."<sup>9</sup>

Of course, the common, though true and sincere, arguments advanced, were that free institutions could only succeed by free schools. "That the whole people, without distinction of age, sex, or condition, shall have unrestrained access to the fountains of public instruction, in order that our free institutions may be transmitted to posterity in undecayed magnificence."<sup>10</sup>

Infrequently a moral persuasion for the necessity of educating the children said, "it is the duty of the State to educate every child in it. There could not be a more rational, patriotic or benevolent expenditure of wealth than in the holy cause of education, and thus the moral improvement of our population."<sup>11</sup>

Governor French, who had been ex-officio state superintendent, asked the legislature to repeal all school laws and start anew with a simple system of education supported by tax on property, and made free to all children alike. "I desire to see a system by which every child, whatever its condition or parentage, may have an opportunity to obtain an education equal with the most affluent of our state—such as will fit them for any grade or condition of life."<sup>12</sup>

Governor Matteson, following Governor French in office, made a somewhat similar statement: "Intelligence gives to the country happiness at home and respect abroad \* \* \*. Why not open its portals wide and make its benefits universal? \* \* \* I now repeat that the laws in relation to schools be repealed, and that in the place of them a simple law be passed—by which a general system of schools shall be established, and maintained entirely by levies (so far as the school fund shall be insufficient) upon property open and free to every child within the borders of the state. This recommendation con-

<sup>9</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, vol. 8, p. 335.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>11</sup> *Sangamo Jr.*, July 20, 1847.

<sup>12</sup> *Sen. and House Rep.*, 1853, p. 8.

templates a system of instruction of a character sufficiently elevated to fit every child for every rank and station in life.”<sup>13</sup>

The legislature though unready to inaugurate those ideas into laws immediately, did create a separate department of public instruction. With a capable man as state superintendent, it was thought that the cause of the common schools would be advanced most rapidly. A brighter day for education was at hand. Governor Matteson, in 1854, appointed Ninian W. Edwards, son of the first territorial governor of Illinois, and a man who had held the office of attorney general and been a member of the state legislature for sixteen years, the first state superintendent.<sup>13a</sup> Mr. Edwards was charged with the duty of reporting “a bill to the next regular session of the General Assembly, for a system of free school education throughout the State, and the manner for the support of which system to be provided for by a uniform ad valorem tax upon property, to be assessed and collected as other state and county revenue is assessed and collected.”<sup>14</sup>

Mr. Edwards, complying with the request of the legislature, reported a thoroughly comprehensive bill with the reasons for its passage. The bill provided for the election and duties of the state superintendent; the election and duties of school commissioners; the election, duties and powers of township boards of education; judgments and executions against school boards; the examination, qualification and duties of teachers; school libraries; township and county school funds; common school funds, and additional taxes for the support of schools.

The legislature accepted the bill but made some modifications by keeping the district system, which had been excluded, and by imposing a state tax for education. The tax amounted to two mills on the dollar, and was added in the distribution to other funds which made up the common school fund “The common school fund of this state shall consist of such sums as will be produced by an annual levy and assessment of two mills upon each dollar’s valuation of all taxable pro-

<sup>13</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, 1854, p. 102.

<sup>13a</sup> The legislature enacted a law creating a separate office of Superintendent of common schools in 1854. It made it the immediate duty of the governor to fill the office until the November election of 1855.

<sup>14</sup> *State Supt. Rep.*, 1885-86, p. 190.



perty in the state, and there is hereby levied and assessed annually, in addition to the revenue for state purposes, the said two mills upon each dollar's valuation of all the taxable property in the state, to be collected and paid as other revenue is collected and paid", etc.<sup>15</sup>

In the next place, the law of 1855 made it mandatory that the trustees of both townships and local districts should levy a tax to supplement the distributable fund of the State. At least one free school in every district should be established and kept in operation six months out of each year. In addition, "for the purpose of erecting schoolhouses, or purchasing schoolhouse sites, or for the repairing and improving the same, for procuring furniture, fuel and district libraries, the board of education of any district shall be authorized to have levied and collected a tax annually on all property in their district." <sup>16</sup>

It seemed that there was some misunderstanding, intentional or otherwise, over the purposes for which a tax could be levied. Hence the law of 1859 restated that provision more specifically. "For the purpose of establishing and supporting free schools for six months, and defraying all expenses of the same, of every description; for the purpose of repairing and improving schoolhouses; of procuring furniture, fuel, libraries and apparatus, and for all other necessary incidental expenses, the directors of each district shall be authorized to levy a tax, annually, upon all the taxable property of the district. They may also appropriate to the purchase of libraries and apparatus, any surplus funds, after all necessary school expenses are paid." <sup>17</sup>

Since there was a fund to be distributed to the common schools by the state, provision was made in the law to base two-thirds of the distribution on the number of white children in each county between five and twenty-one years of age, and one-third on the number of townships or parts of townships in each county. "On the first Monday in June, in each and every year, next after taking the census of the state, the auditor of public accounts shall, under the supervision of the commissioners of the school fund of the state, ascertain the

<sup>15</sup> Sess. Laws, 1855, Sec. 67, p. 77.

<sup>16</sup> Sess. Laws, 1855, Sec. 71, p. 78.

<sup>17</sup> Ill. Teach., v. 5, p. 3 of Circular of State Supt.

number of white children in each county in the state, under twenty-one years of age, and shall thereupon make a dividend to each county of two-thirds the sum from the tax levied and collected; and the interest due on the school, seminary and college fund, in proportion to the number of white children in each county under the age aforesaid, and of the remaining one-third, in proportion to the number of townships and parts of townships in each county.”<sup>18</sup>

Finally, the money due the townships should be distributed “in proportion to the number of days certified on such schedules respectively to have been taught since the last regular return day fixed by the act or trustees for the return of schedules.”<sup>19</sup>

The greatest objections to the free school law, which taxed property for the support of education, were obviated by the method of distributing the state school fund. The more thickly populated sections benefited by the distribution on the number of children under twenty-one years of age. The sparser districts were helped by the distribution on the number of townships or fractions thereof per county. Moreover, the richer sections, which might also have the greatest number of minors, paid the biggest share of the tax. Cook county paid out \$65,150.31, and received \$29, 185.02, while Williamson county paid out \$1,737.04, and received \$4,917.25.<sup>19a</sup> It is easily seen, therefore, that the state tax distribution method was a powerful argument that carried in poorer sections where other reasons failed. The principle of distributing state money, collected from the richer sections, to help poorer districts was first used after 1855.

### *The Attitude to the Free Schools.*

Quite frequently the attitude to the common schools became one of defense for, or objection to the private academies and select schools. Occasionally, the semi-public academies were included in the condemnation. The struggle concerned itself, therefore, for the supremacy of one system of education over another. Should leaders in society, and they alone from the wealthy people, be educated by the acad-

<sup>18</sup> Sess. Laws, 1855, Sec. 69, p. 78.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Sec. 36, p. 61.

<sup>19a</sup> Sangamon county paid out \$23,440.75, and received \$12,412.82. See Auditor's Report for 1855-6, p. 35-6.

emies, thus leaving the poor people to shift for themselves? Or, should the State adopt a system of free education especially favorable to the common man? It did adopt such a system in 1855, with the result that its friends began to sing its praises. The virtues usually found were superior in the common schools, inferior in the academies.

First and pre-eminent, were the arguments from democracy. The children of the rich and the poor, the high and the low, were all on the same level in the common schools. Rewards and punishments, success and failure came as a result of individual merit rather than distinction from wealth and parentage. In the light of our republican institutions, private schools were a failure. "They were the nurseries of aristocracy; not the aristocracy which despises the poor man because he is poor—which calls men of moderate means, small fisted farmers, greasy mechanics, and filthy operators, unfit to associate with well-bred gentlemen, and says free society is a failure, which threatens the overthrow of republicanism, and is hard upon our free schools:"<sup>20</sup>

Private schools, pushed to their logical conclusions, would divide the American people into classes entirely contrary to our traditions. Not only would the rich and poor be separated, but "there must be schools to represent particular nationalities and particular forms of belief. And this would perpetuate national peculiarities, and embitter religious prejudices and beget a clannish spirit, and divide society more and more into parties estranged and hostile to each other, when every effort should be bound together by friendly intercourse in universal sympathy and concord. And I know of no minor agency to affect this than a well devised and well sustained system of common public schools."<sup>21</sup>

In the common schools "and the humbler walks of life, where talent is oftenest found, the gifted and good—educate and qualify themselves for the responsible positions in life."<sup>22</sup>

Common schools, universally established, would enable parents, "to educate their children at home, where they can counsel with the teacher in the formation of the child's char-

<sup>20</sup> Ill. Teach.. v. 4, p. 78.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

acter, and where they can detect and check those tendencies to evil to which most children are prone.”<sup>23</sup>

Besides, private schools and academies were located where they were least needed. “The private school system will never plant schools where they are needed to meet the wants of the entire community. Hence some, nay, many would under it be excluded from all school privileges by location. Teachers will of course choose to establish schools only in dense and wealthy communities, where good compensation will be assured to them, and the poorer and more sparsely settled sections of the country will be left altogether unsupplied.”<sup>24</sup>

Even though academies were rightly located, “they are too expensive for general use. Teachers must live; and private schools must charge a rate of tuition per scholar which will support the teacher or teachers, and afford a superior income sufficient to pay rent for buildings and fixtures, and this will make education much more expensive to scholars than when the property is taxed to support the schools of the district. And especially does this private school system press heavily upon those in the community who are rich only in mouths to be filled, backs and feet to be covered, and bills to be paid. Multitudes of children must remain untaught if only this system be in operation among us.”<sup>25</sup>

Finally, the private school teacher sacrificed efficiency for popularity with pupils, which meant popularity with the parents. Some thought that popularity was incompatible with the proper handling of pupils, because the only concern of the teacher should be to know and do his duty. Wealth ought not make any difference in the children’s school privileges. But common school pupils paid only thirty dollars, where academic pupils paid ninety dollars for instruction.

However, it was recognized that the academy had some advantages. (1) “The teachers in the private schools, as a class, are superior in natural endowments and scientific attainments to the teachers in the public schools. They must be so to sustain themselves. No private school with inferior teachers at its head ever had more than an ephemeral existence; while nine-tenths of the public schools, taking the coun-

<sup>23</sup> *Ill. Teach.*, p. 80.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.



try through, are supplied with teachers of an inferior grade, unfit to be trusted with the molding of immortal minds.”<sup>26</sup> (2) The equipment and apparatus was far superior in the academies. (3) The academies had a more enriched curriculum while public school education was “confined to the intellect at the expense of manners, morals, and the organic structure. Better no education, than such education. It only tends to make rogues.”<sup>27</sup>

It is evident therefore, that the State was divided into two groups, the one favoring public schools, the other academies. The south, generally, wanted to be left alone with its original class system of education. On the other hand, the north wanted to impose its common school system on all alike, the State over. The attitude of the two sections can be clearly obtained by studying the literature of each of the two groups. Many times the south was bitterly opposed to the common school, while the north eulogized it.

“We have got to hating everything with the prefix free, from free negroes up and down through the whole catalogues—free farms, free labor, free society, free will, free thinking, free children, and free schools—all belonging to the same brood of damnable isms; but the worst of all these abominations is the modern system of free schools. We abominate the system because the schools are free.”<sup>28</sup>

The other attitude follows: “We dedicate it to freedom; to humanity; to advancing civilization of the ages; to an ever onward, ever upward, and ever glorious career of conjoined knowledge and industry, science and art, justice and humanity. In a word, we dedicate it to the human race, to Christ, and to God, to the truth they enjoin, the beneficence they inspire, and the glory they impart; and should any ever in the future attempt to divert or hinder it from these great ends, this glorious career, we this day pray that their hands and their tongues may become palsied and powerless; that its beams and rafters may cry out against them, and its very bricks and stones confront and repel them; and that, ever guarding its own vestal fire within, it may throw far abroad the radiance of its own light—resplendent and beneficent to

<sup>26</sup> Ill. Teach., v. 4, p. 77.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

all on earth—accepted and blessed by all in Heaven; and that from age to age the zephyrs may still waft the sweet music of its love over the green grass where its founders rest as successive generations of youthful voices arises to call them the blessed of the Lord.”<sup>23</sup>

Ex-Gov. Reynolds, at this time, wrote a little book urging the people of the south to accept the free school law. The repeal of the Missouri Compromise through the Dred Scot Decision, and the birth of the Republican party kindled anew the sectional feeling. So it is doubtful whether his book had a wide circulation and much influence in the interests of free education in the southern part of the State.

S. W. Moulton, who managed the free school law in the legislature, spoke of it, about the time Reynolds wrote his book, as having aroused the people from apathy because their interest lay where their money was spent. The property tax led, therefore, to suggestions and improvements in the law that could not be foreseen until experience was obtained by practice.

Since there were two extreme beliefs over the free school bill depicted, and since it appears that the opposition was connected with slavery, and in justice to both the North and the South, it would be in order to state from the evidence which we have what each section contributed and what its attitude has been to education.

The academy was supported alike by both sections, it having been first introduced by the South because southerners settled Illinois first. Though it operated in both sections for the education of leaders, the children of the poor were to be educated gratis, and a common school department for the “public” was usually attached. Manual labor was adopted principally to make it economically possible for the less wealthy to receive an education.

The apprentice laws were of southern origin, and the indentures were usually those of negroes or mulattoes. The explanation of the introduction of the apprenticeship system by the way of the South instead of the North lies in the fact that the northerner did not come until only the vestiges of indentures remained in the older eastern states; while the

---

<sup>23</sup> Ill. Teach., v. 4, p. 185.

southern immigration took place at an earlier time when the apprenticeship system was a little more common.

To the South should be attributed the enactment of the first free school law in 1825. The poor and ignorant for whom it was especially designed to benefit objected because they did not understand its benefits and could not pay the necessary tax for the support of schools. The South was wholly to blame for the repeal of the law.

Again, the South forged to the front in the proposed legislation for free schools, and county normal schools which were to be supported as the academies were in Kentucky and Virginia, but these plans were finally rejected by a legislature whose majority consisted of representatives from the older southern counties in Illinois.

The adoption of the recommendation of the representative leaders from both sections for a state superintendent of common schools failed, but the office was vested ex-officio in that of the Secretary of State. This was probably patterned after the Pennsylvania type.<sup>30</sup>

However, the resolutions, recommendations and petitions for a separate state superintendent came almost exclusively from the newer counties of the northern and western sections which were settled by New Englanders and easterners.<sup>31</sup>

The growth of the question of taxation is illustrative of the attitude of northern and southern Illinois toward free schools. The legislature, besides granting the right of taxation for school purposes in a few city charters, passed a general law in 1845 which allowed communities to levy a property tax by a two-thirds majority vote for school purposes. The taxing clause was changed in 1848 to a majority vote.

The first report, issued in 1849, which dealt with an ad valorem property tax for schools, showed that \$29,947.46 was voluntarily levied by the people. Thirty of the counties levying such tax were in the northern part of the State, while six were in the southern part. In 1852, \$51,101.14 were likewise voluntarily levied by forty-three counties, thirty-six of which were northern and seven southern. Of the twenty-six coun-

<sup>30</sup> Assembly Reports, 1844, p. 103.

<sup>31</sup> Assembly Reports, 1846, 1849, 1851, 1853, Jr. Const. Con., 1847.

ties that did not levy a tax, eighteen were southern and eight northern counties.<sup>32</sup>

In the senate, the free school bill of 1855 passed by a vote of 20 to 3, and in the house, 47 to 14. An analysis of the vote relative to the section from which the representatives came shows that most of the opposition was in the southern tier of counties stretching to the east and southeast of St. Louis across the State.

Therefore, it is evident that the opposition to the idea of free education came from the old southern portion of the State. This probably was not due to the fact that these people were southern in origin for such leaders as Coles, Duncan and Edwards, always champions of free schools, migrated to Illinois from the South; but rather the opposition finds its explanation in the fact that the southern districts were economically much less able to support free schools than the fertile and commercial northern sections.

Before discussing the beginnings and characteristics of the high school, a summary of the free school law of 1855 follows. The constitutional convention of 1847 accepted the first reading of a bill which provided for a free system of public schools, and a state superintendent to give the proposal effect, but the convention omitted all mention of free schools in the final draft of the constitution. However, the leaders, associations and editors continued to agitate the same question until the legislature authorized the separation of the Department of State and the schools. It also authorized the appointment of a state superintendent and required that he prepare a bill for the reorganization of a school system, which bill was adopted in 1855. A state tax of two mills was levied on every dollar of property and the income added to the annual distribution of the common school fund; a local tax was levied by the trustees of both township and district to help maintain at least one free school in every district for six months in the year. The state common school fund was distributed in such a manner that two-thirds was given to the county on the basis of the number of white children between the ages of five and twenty-one years, and the remaining one-third on the basis of the number of townships,

---

<sup>32</sup> Assembly Reports, 1849, p. 116; 1853, p. 149.



or parts of townships in each county. The money due the townships was to be distributed in proportion to the number of days of school that were actually taught.

The method of distribution of the state school fund, which benefited the poorer sections as well as the richer districts was a powerful argument in favor of free schools. They were democratic; they were the means by which children could be educated at home; they were located where they were needed; they were inexpensive. On the other hand, the successful academies had superior teachers; they were better equipped; they had more extensive subjects of study. Thus two sharply defined groups existed in the State; the one favored the common school, the other favored the academy. At one extreme, the free school was placed in a class with free negroes; at the other, it was eulogized. How the common school supplied some of the secondary education of the time follows.

## CHAPTER XII.

*The Beginnings and Characteristics of the Free Public High School of 1860.*

The high school as a separate institution was not usually so designated, and thought of, until quite a while after the passage of the free school law of 1855. The academy had long been the means of secondary education, but the common school had even before 1850 begun to usurp the province of the former institution. The academy was the chief means of providing education for the aristocracy of society. The common people had no way to gain similar advantages for their children. The academy was open to them, but tuition charges, the cost of sending children to live away from home combined with the inaccessibility of the academy, kept the common children at home. But the working men were imbued with high ideals. Their children must have advantages provided that the parents missed. The common school was the only way open. That humble institution struggled along until we see it occupying the center of the stage of political and educational thought. Though it was called the common school, by 1860 it came to mean both the elementary school and the high school. "The high school and the common school are part of the same system. The one is the head, the other the heart. One is the branches, the other the root."<sup>1</sup>

One of the chief ways by which the high school came to be the upper part of the common school system was through gradation. The very first mention of that idea, applied to the common schools, was the suggestion of that subject in an article for contribution to the Common School Advocate, in 1837. A year later, the Sangamo Journal printed an article on the system of schools in the State in which gradation was suggested.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ill. Teach., v. 8, p. 49.

“In addition to the primary schools \* \* \* we must have academies or high schools and colleges. The first finishing the education of many of its students whose means will not permit them to pursue it farther, and only the more thoroughly preparing others to enter the second, where alone their scholastic pursuits can be closed.”<sup>2</sup>

The *Prairie Farmer* in 1844 advocated the establishment of a school system with three departments, because it deprecated the growing influence of the academies. “And what shall be the remedy? We do not expect a community justly appreciating education, and desirous of affording to their children the means of procuring the higher branches, will rest passive with inferior schools, neither would we desire any such lowering of the standard of education. But instead of creating independent select schools, we would have a plan something after this sort adopted. In the first place, the district should be large, and as the school increased, instead of dividing districts, sending large and small children to the same school, the school should be divided, classifying the scholars according to their progress. Where the number of scholars would admit of it, there should be at least three grades of schools. For the small children, say under ten years of age, female teachers should be employed, and the schools should be as numerous as possible, to facilitate attendance. For the next grade, the instruction and number of schools should depend upon circumstances. For the highest grade, there should be but one school within a circuit of at least three miles diameter, no matter how thickly settled the town if under ten or fifteen thousand inhabitants, and generally there should be but one such school to a township, and occasionally but one in a county.”<sup>3</sup>

Next, educational conventions discussed the merits of gradation and advocated the adoption of such a scheme in their resolutions. “Resolved, That it be earnestly recommended to school officers to establish such a classification of studies and gradation of schools as will prevent the great waste of time, effort, and money, to which our schools are now subject; and that experience proves the feasibility and profit of the following system of gradation:”

<sup>2</sup> *San. Jr.*, Apr. 21, 1838.

<sup>3</sup> *State Supt. Rep.*, 1885, p. 160.

First. Primary schools, in which as many of the youngest pupils shall be taught in the full rudiments of education as one female teacher can instruct."

'Second. Grammar schools, both male and female, in which the elementary and common English studies shall be pursued, viz.—Geography, Written Arithmetic, Grammar, Reading, Spelling, and Writing; the number of these schools being smaller and the number of pupils larger than the lower grade''.

"Third. One high school for each large town or city, in which the higher English branches and Languages shall be taught; the pupils to be admitted by examination from the Grammar schools, and those of Grammar schools in the same manner from the Primary schools." <sup>4</sup>

From the above typical citations, the first scheme of gradation included three departments, namely, primary, grammar, and high. Now, a territorial basis was also necessary. More primary than grammar schools should be established, and one higher department serving for many of the others. To carry out that idea, the policy of joining districts grew up, and the name, union, or union graded schools, became somewhat common.

The idea of establishing union districts by law was slow in developing. The law of 1825 provided that there should be at least fifteen families in a school district, but the amendment of 1827 said that there must be at least eighteen children going to school or subscribed, and the amendment in 1829 made the size of a district a purely voluntary affair. The legislature, in 1841, provided for the appointment of township trustees who were to establish districts within the township as suited the convenience and wishes of the people; as many schools could be kept in a district as the people desired. Six years later an additional amendment provided, "that districts may be altered at any time by said trustees to suit the wishes of a majority of the inhabitants in the districts interested," <sup>5</sup> and that children might be transferred from one district to another. By 1853, the practice of creating union districts had grown considerably so that the legislature occasionally legalized the action of some directors:

<sup>4</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, v. 8, p. 273.

<sup>5</sup> *Sess. Laws*, 1847, p. 130, sec. 46.



"Sec. 3. Said district shall be called Union School District, and shall have, enjoy, possess and exercise all rights, powers, privileges, advantages and immunities of other school districts, shall be entitled to its equal and joint proportions of the school funds, and shall be organized, regulated, controlled and governed by the laws of the state now in force, or that may be hereafter passed."<sup>6</sup>

The free school law, two years later, provided for the establishment of union districts: "Whenever it may be desirable to establish a school composed of pupils, residents of two or more districts, or two or more townships, it shall be the duty of the respective boards of Education of each of such townships to transfer such number of the pupils residing in such townships as the boards may deem proper to the school so established in the township in which the school house is or may be located; but the enumeration of scholars shall be taken in each of such townships as if no such transfer had been made; and such school funds of the respective townships in which the pupils composing such school shall reside, and from which they shall have been transferred; and the board of that township in which the school house where such school is located shall have the control and management of such school; and the boards of each of such townships so connected for school purposes shall each pay its respective share of the entire expenses of every kind incurred in the establishment and support of such school, to be computed in proportion to the number of pupils residing in each of such townships composing such school; and each board of the townships from which pupils are transferred shall draw an order on its township treasurer, signed by its president, in favor of the township treasurer whose board shall have the control and management of such school, as the case may be, for the amount of its share of the entire expenses aforesaid of such school, and the board of the township having control and management as aforesaid of such school shall pay out of its treasury the whole amount required for the establishment and maintenance of such schools, in the manner as provided in this act for the establishment and maintenance of other schools; Provided,

---

<sup>6</sup> Sess. Laws, 1853, p. 186.

however, by agreement of the several boards interested therein, said school may be placed under the control and management of such persons as may be determined by a majority of said boards."<sup>7</sup>

The Illinois Teacher gave the reason for the name, union schools, thus: "They are called Union Schools because they afford all the advantages of a well conducted common or select school and academy for gentlemen, and the seminary for ladies; they are called graded because the pupils are classified according to their attainments; in such, the scholar may commence with the alphabet and pass from one grade to another, until prepared to engage in the common pursuits of life, or enter any college or university."<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, it is quite evident that the high school was a part of the union graded system. Moreover, it was essential to the union graded schools to have a high school as the capstone. "Our Union Graded Schools have demonstrated to the most skeptical that by adopting this plan they can have schools, apparatus and libraries, equal, if not superior, to our private institutions, with but a small additional expense to the present system. We look upon the establishment of the Union Graded, or Central High School to be essential to the free school system."<sup>9</sup>

The scheme of gradation was advocated somewhat vigorously over the State because its advocates believed that it was economical; that it was a stimulus to exertion on the part of the pupil; that classification could be made on merit; that the school system would become a selective agent; that a broader range of studies was possible; that school work could be made continuous; that more expert teaching was possible; and that better organization and administration resulted.<sup>9a</sup>

From the above advantages of gradation, as were pointed out in educational thought, the framers of educational legislation were induced to make provision for graded schools in the bill of 1854. Township boards "shall have power to establish schools of different grades, to assign such number of scholars to such schools as they may think best, and to control

<sup>7</sup> Sess. Laws, 1855, p. 61, sec. 37.

<sup>8</sup> Ill. Teach., v. I, p. 257.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. v. 4, p. 6.

<sup>9a</sup> These arguments are greatly expanded in the Illinois Teacher, Volume 4, page 90.

and regulate the admission of scholars to schools of the higher and different grades, and if on account of great distance or difficulty of access to the schools in any township, or on account of the scholar being too far advanced to prosecute his studies in any school in his township, any of the pupils could be more conveniently accommodated in any other schools, academies or colleges in this State, the board of education shall have the power to make an arrangement by which such pupils may be instructed in the most convenient school, academy or college in this state, and the expense of such instruction shall be paid out of the public funds, as may be agreed upon by the board of education." <sup>10</sup>

The high school developed as a part of the common school system when the common schools became graded into primary, grammar and higher departments. It is true that the gradation of each of the departments took place next, but we are only concerned now with the last department. The academy may be said to have represented the upper part of the common school system in an ungraded form, with some enrichment of the curriculum. With the great power of the State behind the free common schools, the private schools and academies could not compete. Many of the private institutions accordingly, asked the state superintendent how they could be changed into high or union graded schools under the present law. By the law of 1855, as amended in 1857 and 1859, two methods were open:

1. The directors of all the districts that wanted to unite should determine the number of scholars to attend the new school, should erect, rent or purchase a building and should levy a tax on each district in proportion to the number of pupils therefrom. The academy buildings might be so selected, and the directors in the district where the school was to be located should have its control and management.

2. All district directors might elect three trustees to be styled, directors of union district No.—, in township No.—. The union directors should have power to levy a tax on all property of the union district. Pupils should be admitted from outside the union district under such rules as the trustees should see fit to establish.

---

<sup>10</sup> State Supt. Rep., 1854, p. 30.

The difference in the two methods lay in the fact that, in the first, the tax was to be levied on each district in proportion to the number of pupils therefrom and the care of the school rested in the hands of the directors where the school was located. By the second plan, the directors were the trustees of the entire union district with the power to levy taxes on all of the property in the union district. Finally, the school was under the control of the directors representing the whole district.

By these provisions, private institutions could become public. Whether they did or not must be proved by investigation, although the state superintendent said, "that nearly two-thirds of all the private Academies and Seminaries that existed in the state have thrown up their organizations and reorganized under the Common School law."<sup>11</sup>

*A list of Illinois High Schools in Existence at the Beginning of the Civil War.*

The ordinary conception is that few free high schools were in existence in the United States before the Civil War. But investigations in Massachusetts, Ohio and Illinois have shown that an unexpected number were in operation. Certainly those institutions were not our present day high schools any more than early Harvard and Yale were the universities we know today. The characteristics of the high schools in Illinois before the Civil War were clearly enough marked out to warrant the use of the term—high school.

Then, we shall give a few examples to show how we have concluded that the free high schools were established as given in the table below. First, let us take Chicago. The legislature, March 1, 1839, gave the city council power to tax for schools.

"Sec. 3. The Common Council of the City of Chicago shall have power to raise all sufficient sums of money, by taxing the real and personal estates in said city, for the following purposes, to wit: To build school houses; to establish, support and maintain common and public schools, and to supply the inadequacy of the school fund for the payment of teachers; to purchase or lease a site or sites for school houses; to erect, hire or purchase buildings suitable for said

<sup>11</sup> As an example of reorganization, see the special act allowing Crystal Lake Academy to reorganize. Sess. Laws, 1857, p. 1223.



school houses; to keep in repair and furnish the same with necessary fixtures and furniture whenever they may deem it expedient; and the taxes for that purpose shall be assessed and collected in the same manner that other city taxes are or may be.”<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, a free high school could have been established in Chicago. About 1840, the schools of the city were reorganized and the board of inspectors in their annual report said “Had we the means, the establishment of a High School, with two good teachers, into which might be placed a hundred of the best instructed scholars from different schools, would remedy this increasing evil.”<sup>13</sup>

The school committee, in 1844, advocated a high school for advanced pupils. “The lower story to be divided into two rooms, one for small boys and another for small girls, the upper room to be so divided as to give necessary recitation rooms for a High School, so that one Principal Teacher and two or three assistants shall be able to conduct the several schools, and thus give it a High School in which may be placed the more advanced scholars.”<sup>14</sup>

Again, in 1846, the inspectors called the attention of the common council to the need of “at least one school where the ordinary academic studies may be taught.”<sup>15</sup>

The school committee, the next year, in its report said, “In reference to a High School, they are of the opinion that there are insuperable objections to the establishment of such a school, independent of the inability of the city at the present time to build one.”<sup>16</sup>

However, a special committee reported a plan to the city council for the establishment of a high school, and gave the reasons why the city should have such an institution. There upon, Dec. 11, 1854, the city council “Ordered, That the Committee on Schools be directed to prepare an ordinance for the establishment of a High School in connection with our Public School System.”

“Ordered, That said Committee recommend a site for said School, and that the Superintendent of Public Schools

<sup>12</sup> Sess. Laws, 1838-39, p. 215.

<sup>13</sup> Chi. School Rep., 1879, p. 43.

<sup>14</sup> Chi. School Rep., 1879, p. 48.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

be requested to furnish an outline plan of a building for the accommodation of said school.”<sup>17</sup>

Jan. 23, 1855, the common council passed an ordinance establishing a high school, which institution was opened in a building erected for it, Oct. 1856.

Next take Virginia. The law of 1845 made provision for the levying of taxes in any district where two-thirds of the voters decided to tax themselves for schools. This village took advantage of the law and a year later had a high school department in operation as appears from this quotation: “We have a common school of grades in Virginia, commenced in July, conducted by two teachers, in separate departments, with eighty scholars, in which a thorough course of instruction in the English branches of Education, in Mathematics, in Latin, Greek, and French Languages, and in the ornamental branches, are ably taught. We have a third department in the same building, liberally granted by the county commissioners’ court for a nominal amount approved by the people, which will be fitted for use when the number of scholars justifies the employment of additional teachers \* \* \* This school district and Beardstown \* \* \* voted in May last the highest rate of taxation under the law.”<sup>18</sup>

Similarly, a union school, with a high school department was in operation in Rockton in 1851: “In the afternoon of the same day, we visited the Rockton Union School, under the Superintendence of Mr. Seely Perry, \* \* \* In this school are realized more fully than in any other district in the county the advantages of a division of labor. There were about 160 pupils in the school, embracing classes in all stages of progress, from the alphabet up to the highest branches of classical and natural science taught in our best academies.”<sup>19</sup>

Finally, communications, and the reports of the state agent who travelled for the establishment of free schools, showed that high schools were opened, many relatively permanent, and some whose existence ended with the decay of the villages from economic conditions. The following table, perhaps, has omitted some high schools that were in existence,

<sup>17</sup> Chi. School Rep. 1879, p. 50.

<sup>18</sup> Prairie Farmer, v. 6, p. 86.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., v. 11, p. 160.

but it shows that the free high school had a good start by 1860.

Alton .....	1859	Kewanee .....	1859
Atlanta .....	1859	Lacon .....	1858
Belleville .....	1860	LeRoy .....	1856
Belvidere.....	1857	Lockport .....	1856
Bloomington .....	1856	Lee Union Center...	1859
New Boston.....	1860	Lyndon .....	1847
Brimfield .....	1860	Mount Vernon Acad-	
Canton .....	1862	emy, changed to	
Chester .....	1856	free school.....	1856
Chicago .....	1856	Nashville Academy,	
Decatur .....	1856-62	changed to free	
Dwight .....	1860	school .....	1858
Dixon .....	1857	Ottawa .....	1857
Eden .....	1856	Paris .....	1856-66
East Elgin.....	1856	Sparta .....	1856
East Pawpaw.....	1856	Peoria .....	1856
Franklin Grove....	1856	Plainfield .....	1856
Freeport ....	About 1851	Princeton .....	1857-66
Fulton City.....	1860	Prairieville .....	1858
Galena, Male High		Urbana Seminary,	
School and Female		changed to free	
High School.....	1857	school .....	1856-58
Galva .....	1859	Quincy .....	1856
Geneseo .....	1852-59	Rockford .....	1862
Galesburg, but		Rock Island.....	1858
charged tuition		Rockton .....	1851
for several years..	1859-60	Springfield .....	1858
Hom er Seminary,		Vandalia .....	1858
changed to free		Virginia .....	1846
school .....	1858	Warsaw .....	1858
Jacksonville, West...	1851	Washington, T a z e -	
Jerseyville, mostly		well Co.....	1858
free .....	1853	Waukegan .....	1856
Joliet .....	1858	Wethersfield .....	1859

### *Subjects of Study.*

Since the common school included a high school department in numerous instances, it is to be expected that second-

ary subjects of study existed along with elementary subjects. Either high school subjects were contemplated, or they were being taught in some common schools before the permanent free school law was passed. The county superintendent of Stark county hoped to have the common schools so perfected, "as to be able to teach, in the most approved manner, all that our children need to learn in order to fit them for the ordinary avocations of life. They not only need to know how to read and write and cipher, but to have some knowledge of History, Natural and Mental Philosophy, Political Economy, Chemistry, Physiology, Geology and Meteorology. All these may be profitably taught in our common schools."<sup>20</sup>

However, in those communities where the town charter had given the common council the right to impose a tax for the support of schools, or in those places where the people were willing by a two-thirds and then later a majority vote to tax themselves for education, or where the schools were graded, there, subjects of an advanced nature were taught. Chicago common schools in 1847, were teaching, besides such subjects as reading, writing and arithmetic, Townes' Intellectual Algebra, Baley's Algebra, Preston's District School Book-keeping, Physiology, Gales' Philosophy and Gray's Chemistry."<sup>21</sup>

In the Rockton Union School, subjects were taught "from the alphabet up to the highest branches of classical and natural sciences taught in our best academies."<sup>22</sup> In Virginia, Ill., the common schools were graded so that in the upper division there was a "thorough course of instruction in the English branches of education; in mathematics; in Latin, Greek, and French Languages, and in the ornamental branches."<sup>23</sup> A union school at Freeport taught, besides the common branches, mathematics, natural and moral sciences, French, Greek and Latin.<sup>24</sup> At Carrollton, German, French, Latin, Greek and Spanish, in addition to the common branches, were taught in the common schools.<sup>25</sup> The county superintendent of Peoria county reported that chemistry,

<sup>20</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, v. 12, p. 236.

<sup>21</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, v. 7, p. 372.

<sup>22</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, v. II, 1851, p. 160.

<sup>23</sup> *Prairie Farmer*, v. 6, 1846, p. 86.

<sup>24</sup> *State Supt. Report*, 1851, p. 230.

<sup>25</sup> *House Reports*, 1853, p. 179.



algebra, physiology, ancient and United States history, and philosophy were taught in the common schools.<sup>26</sup> Will county included in the program for the common schools, astronomy, algebra, physiology, chemistry and philosophy.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, subjects of secondary character were taught in some of the common schools in the counties of Champaign, Greene, Johnson, Jefferson, Marion, Pike, Saline, Stark, Lake and Woodford according to the reports of the county superintendents of those counties for 1851.<sup>28</sup> Morgan county had a union graded school at Jacksonville wherein departments of study were included as far as those of college grade.<sup>29</sup> Jerseyville had a high school, mostly free, as a part of the common school system in which teachers were prepared for elementary instruction.<sup>30</sup> In Knox county, a union district building was constructed in which "the plan to be pursued is to select a principal capable of teaching all the branches usually taught in a high school, with sufficient assistance to accomodate the whole district."<sup>31</sup>

The *Prairie Farmer* found that some of the common schools were teaching mental and written arithmetic, drawing, writing, spelling, mathematical, physical, civil and political geography, astronomy, English grammar, United States history, physiology, natural and mental philosophy, algebra, geometry, economics and the ornamental branches.<sup>32</sup>

The subjects in the common schools were not so extensive in scope as those taught in the academies, but they were quite similar. One reason for the likeness was that the common man took his cue from the classes above him. It was the fashion for, say, "Ornamental Branches", to be taught to the children of the working people. While the parents' opportunities had been limited, the study of Latin and Greek, as in the academies, would make their children cultured. When they were arguing for the common school, the leaders thus retained part of the philosophy of the academy in the curricula of the "people's college." The other reason was that

<sup>26</sup> House Reports, 1851, app. of Supt. Report.

<sup>27</sup> House Reports, 1851, app. of Supt. Report.

<sup>28</sup> House Reports, 1851, app. of Supt. Report.

<sup>29</sup> House Reports 1853, p. 163.

<sup>30</sup> House Reports 1853, p. 163.

<sup>31</sup> House Reports, 1849, p. 113.

<sup>32</sup> *Prairie Farmer*. v. 10, 1850, p. 11.

the academies supplied many of the common teachers for the common schools. The teachers naturally taught those subjects which they studied in the academies.

At the time of the passage of the free school law, which gave a decided impetus to the formation of high schools, the educational literature had quite a little about the kind of subject matter, and its organization, that should be adopted by the high school. The Illinois Teacher printed the program of studies which appears in the list below for the guidance of school men. Chicago began its central high school in 1856 with a two year curriculum for prospective teachers, a three year English curriculum and a four year English classical curriculum. Schools reorganizing under the free school law also were advised to study the Chicago curricula for suggestions. However, it is quite probable that most of the common schools enlarged their curricula gradually rather than creating others, *de novo*. The academies, reorganized by the law of 1855, probably continued the subjects that they had taught. At any rate, the core of the curricula that were suggested continued to urge the languages, mathematics, and philosophy, which were the intellectual studies of the academy, as appears from the following programs of study:

#### FIRST YEAR.

First Term—Latin, or English Analysis; Algebra, Elocution and Orthography.

Second Term—Latin, or English Analysis, Algebra, History.

Third Term—Latin, or Elements of Physiology; Arithmetic; History.

#### SECOND YEAR.

First Term—Latin, or Rhetoric; Geometry; History or Greek.

Second Term—Latin, or Rhetoric; Geometry; History or Greek.

Third Term—Latin, or Bookkeeping; Algebra; Botany, or Greek.

#### THIRD YEAR.

First Term—Latin, or Natural History; Physical Geography; Trigonometry, or Greek

Second Term—Latin, or Surveying, etc.; Physiology; Natural Philosophy, or Greek.

Third Term—Latin, or Evidence of Christianity; Review of Arithmetic, etc.; Astronomy, or Greek.

#### FOURTH YEAR.

First Term—Mental Philosophy, or Latin; Rhetoric; Chemistry, or Greek.

Second Term—Mental Philosophy, or Latin; Civil Government; Geology, or Greek.

Third Term—Moral Philosophy, or Latin; Review of Arithmetic, etc.; Logic, or Greek.

It will be seen that there are in reality three courses marked out in this report. The first is the General Course which the main body of the school may be supposed to pursue. It is that given in the scheme omitting the alternative branches. The second, is the course preparatory to College. It is the same as the General course for the first year; but in the second and third years, substitutes Greek, and in the fourth, Latin and Greek. It may be called the Collegiate course. The third is for those who prefer not to study Latin. It differs from the General Course by substituting other studies in the place of Latin for the first three years. It is the Imperfect Course. As sounder notions of Education become prevalent, this course will become less popular and the General Course more so.”<sup>33</sup>

The normal training curriculum of the Chicago High School consisted of a review of the common branches, physical geography, general history, ancient geography, algebra, book-keeping, botany, astronomy, physiology, natural philosophy, chemistry, geology, rhetoric, political science, mental philosophy, moral science, etymology, English literature, reading, drawing, music, recitations and the theory and practice of teaching.

The English course consisted of a review of the common branches, physical geography, general history, ancient geography, algebra, legendre, arithmetic, plane and spherical trigonometry, mensuration, surveying, navigation, book-

<sup>33</sup> Ill. Teacher, v. 4. p. 400.

keeping, botany, astronomy, natural philosophy, chemistry, geology, rhetoric, logic, economics, political science, mental philosophy, moral science, etymology, English literature, reading, drawing, music, German, French.

The English classical curriculum added to the English curriculum, Latin, grammar and prose, Caesar, Cicero, Virgil and Greek.<sup>34</sup>

None of the high schools over the State had such an extensive program as the two above indicated. Peoria gave the following as the subjects taught in her high school in 1856:

"First Class—Spelling in connection with etymology; read and define from the Fifth Reader; Arithmetic completed and reviewed; English Grammar."

"Second Class—Mathematical and Physical Geography; Latin begun; Algebra; Bookkeeping; Spelling weekly."

"Third Class—Geometry and Trigonometry; Latin continued Natural Philosophy; Drawing; Spelling weekly."

"Fourth Class—Chemistry; Latin continued; Rhetoric and Logic; Mental and Moral Philosophy; Reading and Elocution; Spelling weekly."<sup>35</sup>

Greek was to be added if enough pupils, planning to go to college, warranted the formation of a class.

Springfield had practically the same program. The first class was preparatory, and the other three classes offered Latin, Greek, mathematics, English, history and science.<sup>36</sup>

Galesburg had three grades in the high school which were designated as A, B, C. All of the common branches were taught and in addition, mathematics as high as algebra, science in the form of natural philosophy, three classes in Latin, physical geography and rhetoric, composed of essays, declamations and composition.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, the programs of some of the reorganized academies included such subjects as Latin, Greek, French, geometry, plane and spherical trigonometry, chemistry, philosophy and the common branches in preparation for the more advanced work.

From a study of the upper part of the common schools that were being graded, it must be concluded that some sub-

<sup>34</sup> Chicago Report, v. 3, 1856, p. 28.

<sup>35</sup> Illinois Teacher, v. 2, 1856, p. 340.

<sup>36</sup> Springfield Report, 1866, p. 26.

<sup>37</sup> Steele, History of the Galesburg Public Schools.



jects of a secondary nature were generally taught about the time of the enactment of the free school law. Moreover, it was customary to include a review of some of the common branches as the preliminary or preparatory work in the higher department. Therefore, the boundary between primary and secondary education was loosely drawn for a period of about two decades, 1855-1875.

What the province of each was had to be determined in actual practice. The high school as well as the elementary school was becoming an institution whose advantages were open to all the people. The primary schools no longer existed exclusively for the public and secondary education no longer was maintained exclusively as a privilege of the upper classes. The change to a vertical from a parallel system of education entailed no definite number of years in the length of the common school system. No conclusive evidence has been found that the early free public high schools in Illinois had a four-year program. In fact, that length of time for secondary education was not used as a basis for the classification of high schools in the State until about 1880.

Farthermore, the number of years in the grades was equally late of determination. The first mention of gradation in Illinois was in 1837, and the names, primary, intermediate and grammar designated departments which are still quite common. These departments began to be graded in the more progressive communities of the State by 1855, but there was little thought that a year's work in the elementary school should constitute one grade. Some schools had ten grades with the tenth grade the beginning class, and the first grade the most advanced grade of the elementary school, but the length of the elementary school was about six years until 1875. About that time the plan of making the first grade the first year of elementary school work and the adoption of eight years of eight grades was begun. Some schools added a year to the elementary grades to prepare for the high school examination. The year so added was called the seventh grade. Other schools took the common branches or preparatory work out of the high school and added it to the elementary school. A few high schools retained what is now the eighth grade and made a longer high school period. Therefore the

length in years of the elementary schools and many of the high schools in Illinois is the result of a generation or more of development, 1850 to 1880, rather than the adoption, between 1840 and 1850, of the plan of the eight year highly organized volkschule of Prussia as Dr. Judd claims.

### *High School Entrance Requirements.*

The academy, as has been shown in chapter four, admitted almost anyone who was able and willing to pay for instruction; the common school, from necessity, received part of its support in tuition charges before the free school law was passed. Neither were the equipment and the length of the term, nor the quality of instruction comparable to that which was given in the academy until advantages had been gained by the common school in public support, and in the classification and gradation of its pupils. One result of grading the common school, was the imposition of standards that determined when a pupil finished one department and was ready to enter another. In other words, entrance requirements were imposed which consisted of a combination of age and the completion of certain more or less formal work which had been set as a requirement of a particular department. Entrance to the primary school was usually based on age, while it was expected that one had completed the grammar school, or its equivalent, before entering the high school.

At least twenty-six of the high schools—practically all of them growing out of the common school—listed above required that pupils entering the high school pass an examination as a condition of entrance. In other words, entrance requirements were characteristic of the free public high school by 1860.

### *Taxation.*

It has been shown that the school law of 1825 provided for local taxes and the distribution of two per cent of the yearly State revenues for the maintenance of free schools. The legislature repealed the local tax in 1827, and the State tax in 1829. The tax feature of the bills of 1835 and 1841 were annulled, but the legislature in 1845 gave any district the right to levy taxes by a two-thirds majority vote. Also, some cities were given special charters in which the right to

tax the people for the support of schools was granted. Moreover, the same authority legalized the action of some school directors who had levied a tax for the maintenance of free schools at the instance of the people of the district. The final step was taken by the law of 1855, which made it mandatory to tax the people for the support of the schools.<sup>37a</sup>

Since the high school had grown up as a part of the common school in its process of gradation, or had been created by the city councils as a part of the public school system for the given city, or had been an academy that reorganized under the free school law, a second distinguishing characteristic was that it was publicly supported.

#### *Public School Boards.*

For a considerable time before the passage of the free school law, townships were incorporated for educational purposes under the control of elected trustees, and districts within the townships were established to suit the convenience of the people, and were administered by directors who were elected for that purpose. The law of 1855 added the third step which made it possible to have directors of the districts that were to unite, appoint a board, to control the newly created union district. The interpretation by the State Superintendent of the law of 1857, which was a restatement of some of the disputed sections of the law of 1855, made the board for the union district representative of the whole district. Finally, the legislature, in 1865, restated the union district clauses of the previous school laws, obviously to eliminate the troublesome questions of jurisdiction that had arisen in practice.

"A majority of the directors of each of two or more districts may consolidate said districts and appoint three directors for the union district so formed, who shall be styled, 'Directors of Union District No. . . ., Township No. . . .,' who shall have all the powers conferred by law upon other school directors. The proceedings of the act of consolidation shall be signed by a majority of each of the concurring boards of directors, and delivered to the trustees of the proper town-

<sup>37a</sup> The State tax for 1856 was \$606,809.51; for 1866, \$750,000. The local tax for 1856 was \$341,964; for 1866, \$2,078,335. Common school fund 1856, was \$3,005,937.

ship, and shall be evidence of such consolidation, and upon receiving a copy of proceedings, it shall be the duty of the trustees to change the map of the township in accordance therewith, and file the same with the clerk of the county court. The separate boards of directors shall then be dissolved and the union directors shall draw lots for their respective terms of office and be thereafter elected as provided in the forty-second section of the act."<sup>38</sup>

A free public high school not only was an institution that was supported by taxation, and that imposed entrance requirements which were based on elementary education, but it was an institution that was controlled by a board of directors who were elected by the people.

The concluding paragraphs summarize the chapter. Public boards of education administered the high school and the common school as part of the same system, even though the former developed from the latter in the process of gradation and unionization. Schools were first graded into primary, grammar and high departments, and later, each department was graded. More primary than grammar, and more grammar than higher departments were necessary; hence the policy of creating union districts developed in which one institution received the pupils from several districts.

Private institutions reorganized under the free school law and received the benefits of public support. The resolutions adopted by city councils, the reports of the State Superintendent and the State Agent, and newspaper articles showed that about fifty high schools were in operation in Illinois by 1860.

The subjects of study that were taught in some of the common schools were secondary as well as elementary, but a distinct attempt was made to introduce curricula for the use of the high school that had many of the features of the more formal subjects of the academy. However, pupils were generally admitted to the high school only upon the completion of, and the formal examination in certain elementary subjects. The school itself was controlled and supported by the public.

---

<sup>38</sup> Sess. Laws, 1865, p. 117.



## CHAPTER XIII.

*The Establishment of the Free Public High School.*

The present high school system in the State of Illinois has developed solely neither from the township nor the independent district system, but rather it is the product of the growth of the township idea, of the evolution of union districts under special charter, and of the development of districts under general law. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to consider these three phases in a general way.

*Township High Schools.*

People of the central west have been familiar with the Northwest Ordinances which made land grants for school purposes on the basis of townships or subdivisions of them. In 1841, the legislature had gone so far as to allow the inhabitants of a township to become incorporated for the establishment of public schools. By the same act, township trustees were to be elected whose duty it was to district the territory to suit the wishes and convenience of the people in any neighborhood. However, many of the districts so established were too small to support all grades of the common school. Some localities had overcome that difficulty, by about 1850, by joining districts. Others advocated the outright adoption of a township basis for school organization.

Supt. Edwards prepared the free school bill after that plan, but the legislature decided to cling to the mongrel district-township combination. However, some attempts were almost immediately made, in 1857, to adopt a large territory as the basis for the organization of a high school:

“The inhabitants of said townships shall have the power to unite together for school purposes, and select the site or sites for school houses, and to use their surplus funds for the creation of a suitable building for a high school for the use

of both of said townships. They may purchase suitable libraries and apparatus; and employ suitable teachers for such school or schools; they may arrange among themselves in respect to the number of children sent, and money furnished by each township.”<sup>1</sup>

The above quotation is the earliest piece of legislation that has been found for the creation of a township high school. It should be noted that the high school thus to be established was so ordered by a special charter rather than a creation of the free school law. Also, a few years later, the inhabitants of Princeton took the customary recourse of special charter organization:

“All territory now included within the boundaries of the township of Princeton, in the county of Bureau \* \* \*, together with such territory as hereafter may be added thereto, be and is hereby established a common high school district, to be known as the Princeton High School District.”<sup>2</sup>

The period for special charter legislation, however, ended about 1870 and the legislature incorporated the township high school plan in the general school law of 1872. Under the provisions of that law which has been amended from time to time as necessity seemed to require, seventy-one township high school districts are now in existence.

Only two districts were organized by a law of 1905 which was enacted with the expectation that more elastic provisions for township high schools had thus been created. In 1911, a law was passed which sought to make the establishment of community high schools possible. Since the Supreme Court declared the last law unconstitutional, in 1916, after one hundred ninety-one schools had been organized by its provisions, the legislature enacted the law of 1917 which contains some of the most prominent features of the legal foundation for secondary education in Illinois today.

By the provisions of the five above named distinctive township laws, a variety of high school districts were legal and have been established:

1. About half of the township districts in Illinois at the present time follow the lines of the congressional township.

<sup>1</sup> Sess. Laws, 1857, p. 1136.

<sup>2</sup> Sess. Laws, 1867, v. 3, p. 18.

2. Two or more adjoining townships could establish a high school.

3. Two or more adjoining districts were permitted to have a township high school organization.

4. Parts of adjoining townships were allowed to organize for township high schools.

5. The remainder of a township not included in a township high school district could form a township high school.

6. A school district with a population of at least two thousand might organize in township form.

7. A city with not less than one thousand or more than a hundred thousand inhabitants could use the township basis for school purposes.

8. If a township were divided by a navigable stream and there were a political town on each side, both in the same township, each town could organize as a separate township high school district.

9. The inhabitants of any contiguous and compact territory, whether in the same or different townships, might establish a township high school.

10. The law of 1917 includes the whole State as high school territory, either in the form of districts already maintaining high schools, or non-high school districts which must pay the tuition of their pupils in districts that do support high schools.

From these indicated territorial bases for the establishment of township high schools, it is at once evident that the surveyed congressional township is by no means the sole factor in the size of the high school districts. About half of the districts are determined by township lines; some follow the practice provided for in the laws of 1841, which permitted townships or fractional townships to form one school district; others follow the old method of uniting districts which began to be legally recognized about 1850; still others are similar to the general law of 1872, which permitted the city board of education to be elected when the population of the district reached two thousand. Finally, the distinctive new features have obliterated formal boundary lines so that the basal district is that of a community which is able to maintain an efficient school.

At any rate, the larger district for township organization has made it possible to supply the financial resources requisite to the education of the children of the district more adequately than can be done in smaller districts. Not only is the unit of taxation larger, but the township has the legal right to levy the full rate of taxation for secondary education which is allowed in other districts for both elementary and secondary education. Thus twice the amount of money can be raised in the same unit for high schools under the township organization, as can be raised in the same unit for secondary education under district organization.

Therefore, township high school organizations should be superior because they are able to pay higher salaries which command better qualified teachers, and because they can furnish superior equipment in buildings and grounds. The secondary educational opportunities for the children are thereby increased. But a disadvantage has arisen because of the separation and the lack of articulation between the elementary and the secondary schools under township organization. A closer unification among all the schools of the township was contemplated by the organizers and advocates of the township idea about the time when the charters were given to school districts.<sup>2a</sup>

#### *School Districts Under Special Charter.*

It has been shown that a great many academies were chartered by special and separate acts of the Illinois legislature even in spite of the general corporation laws that were on the statute books at the same time. A similar practice has prevailed in relation to the common schools. When villages were incorporated some provisions were made for the establishment of education, and occasionally special charters were granted for the creation of certain school territory in and near the town itself.

The boundaries of school districts from 1850 to 1870 were almost continually changing, sometimes because better educational opportunities could be provided, at other times, because quarrels ensued over such questions as the levying of

---

<sup>2a</sup> Mr. Edwards gave a thorough exposition of the arguments for township organization in 1855. Mr. Bateman and other leaders have since restated Mr. Edwards' arguments.



taxes, the employment of teachers, and the location and construction of buildings. One outgrowth in the change of district lines was the recognition of some of the united territory by the legislature. Some of the special charters thus granted conferred powers on the new districts that were in opposition to the free school laws. In several cases, the right to ascertain the qualities of common school teachers and certificate them was taken from the county superintendent, a power conferred on him by general law, and bestowed on the board of education for the new district.<sup>2b</sup> Moreover, the law of 1859 stated that no teacher should be paid out of the State funds unless he received a certificate from the county superintendent. However, the special legislation granted the districts with charters the right to receive their share of the school money.

According to Supt. Etter, "in many of these districts there is not even an examination as to the qualifications required, and persons are employed to teach without authority, and in direct violation of the plain provisions of school law".<sup>3</sup> He continued to say that several refused to return school statistics in the proper manner or even at all.

Although some districts tried and did evade the free school principle under special charter which granted the board the right to fix the rate of tuition in public schools,<sup>3a</sup> nevertheless all of them had a larger district than was common and many of them provided and carried into execution the plans for free schools of all grades. Besides, the free education of all the youth from six to twenty-one was to be provided in higher as well as primary schools whose length of term was quite above the average of the six months required by the law of 1855. Among some of the very early high schools of the State were those districts with special charters. For instance, Springfield, Galesburg, Lacon and Lee Union Center had high schools established before 1860. Finally, the board under special charter was given the authority to levy a tax on the whole district, but the rate of taxation was limited by the terms of the charter.

---

<sup>2b</sup> See Decatur, Charleston, Kickapoo and Paris special charters.

<sup>3</sup> State Supt. Report, 1875, p. 141.

<sup>3a</sup> See Galesburg charter.

Since most of these districts under special charters, given about the Civil War period, have materially changed in economic and social conditions, the annulment or the amendment of the charters, to meet the demands of present day secondary education would be advantageous. For instance, the maximum tax rate of one per cent on the district may be no longer justifiable. Some of the cities with old charters have cast them aside in order to make more modern organizations, but in 1906, thirty-seven districts still remained.

*School Districts Established by General Law.*

The free school law of 1855 gave a decided impetus to the development of common schools that were in operation at the time of its passage, and made it possible to create new institutions that were free, either directly as common schools or indirectly by the reorganization of academies and select schools:

"It is highly gratifying to be able to state that, while a considerable number of these institutions are still in operation in various portions of the State, two-thirds of those in existence two years since have given place to the Public Schools, or been themselves transformed into Union Graded Schools, *under the law* \* \* \* Scarcely two years have elapsed since the Free School System went into operation in this State, and in that brief period it has nearly swept the entire field of the thousands of Private Schools which then existed."<sup>4</sup>

The number of union graded schools that were reported for 1862 was 402, but it was unreasonable to expect that all of that number were thoroughly graded on the basis of scholarship and attainment so that each of them had a higher department of a secondary nature. "That very many of them are organized and conducted on the true basis, is certain, as I know from personal observation. We have graded schools which in their principles of instruction, are not surpassed by those of any other state within my knowledge."<sup>5</sup> Superintendent Bateman continued by saying that many schools adopted the title of union graded schools that were unworthy of the name.

<sup>4</sup> State Supt. Report, 1857-8, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> State Supt. Report, 1861-2, p. 21.

The terms, common school, graded school, or union graded schools, were used by State Superintendents in their reports from 1855 to 1867 without making any distinction between elementary and high schools. At the latter date, Mr. Bateman stated "that one or more advanced schools, or high schools or departments, have been established in nearly every county of the State".<sup>6</sup> The number of public high schools reported for 1869-70 was 108, around which figure the variation was slight for a period of ten years or so, because the standards for classification and the conception of what a high school ought to be were continually changing:

"The report of high schools for 1880 shows apparently a smaller number than in 1878; but the difference is due to the fact that I asked that only those schools should be classed as high schools which had a regular course of high school study of three or four years' duration—a course that was actually taught to the pupils in the school. As a result of this request, one county that in 1878 reported seven high schools, in 1880 reported none; another county changed from twelve to three; another, from seven to two."'<sup>7</sup>

At this point it will be valuable to look at the district system which had grown to be very pernicious by 1870. The previous laws allowed the township trustees to district the territory although the inhabitants in the township had a permissive voice in fixing boundaries. At one extreme were the trustees, at the other, the district directors with no authority in determining the size of the district. Frequently one set of trustees would make large districts so that all grades of a common school could be supported. A succeeding board, some member of which living in the large district was wealthy and had no children, would cut the district in two and ruin the higher schools. In the continually changing districts, territory of all sizes was included from those that were large to those that were so small that a single family had a whole district all to itself.<sup>8</sup>

The law of 1872 took away the right of township trustees to district the territory at will and gave the district directors the independent right to consolidate districts in contiguous

---

<sup>6</sup> State Supt. Report, 1867, 1868, p. 127.

<sup>7</sup> State Supt. Report, 1879, 1880, p. 92.

<sup>8</sup> State Supt. Report, 1865, 1866, p. 81.

territory. Moreover, the general assembly recognized the necessity for other provisions for secondary education than those made for township high schools and districts with special charters by incorporating in the law of 1872 the sections which gave a community the right to elect an independent board when the population numbered two thousand. The board was expressly given the power to provide free schools of all grades for at least six months in such a district.

From 1872 on to about 1890, it was quite common to have superintendents report that districts in their towns had consolidated and one central high school established for the entire district. Also, about the same time, high schools began to be established in districts under the control of district directors. These institutions were not as well established nor as thorough as the high schools established under township organization or under union districts with special charters, or in cities or villages with boards of education. The legality of high schools in all of these districts is considered next.

### *Legal Decisions.*

Free public high schools may be said to have been firmly established in Illinois when the Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of certain sections of the school law that referred to high schools, either directly or by implication: "The legislature of the State has the power to enact any and all laws proper for the government and welfare of the people of the State not prohibited by the constitution of the United States, or of this State."<sup>9</sup>

Now the constitution of the State of Illinois, adopted in 1870, gave the legislature the right to provide for a system of free common schools: "The General Assembly shall provide a thorough and efficient system of free schools, whereby all the children of this State may receive a good common school education."<sup>10</sup>

But in the case of *Richards vs. Raymond* it was maintained that a tax could not be collected for the support of a township high school because such a school was outside of the meaning of the term, free common school. In that de-

<sup>9</sup> *Richards vs. Raymond*, Supreme Court Rep., v. 92, Ill. p. 612.

<sup>10</sup> Constitution of Ill., 1870, Art. 7. Sec. 1.



cision, the Supreme Court affirmed the decision of the Appellate Court in the following clear and decisive manner:

‘A school of this character is certainly a free school, within the meaning of the constitution. That free schools may be graded and classified so that scholars that may be more advanced in their studies may not be hindered or delayed in the progress of their studies by others, would seem to be within the spirit of the constitution, that contemplates the creation of a thorough and efficient system of free schools. That one may be denominated a high school and another in the same township a district school, cannot affect the question in the least.’

‘But the argument is that the school established is not a common school or a school where the children of the State may receive a good common school education, and hence inhibited by the constitution. No definition of a common school is given or specified in the constitution, nor does that instrument declare what course of studies shall constitute a common school education. How can it be said that a high school is prohibited by the constitution and not included within the definition of a common school? The phrase, a common school education, is not easily defined. One might say that a student instructed in reading, writing, geography, English grammar and arithmetic, had received a common school education; while another who had more enlarged notions on the subject might insist that history, natural philosophy and algebra should be included. It would thus be almost impossible to find two persons who would in all respects agree in regard to what constituted a common school education.’

“Indeed, it is a part of the history of the State, when the constitution was framed, that there was a great want of uniformity in the course of study prescribed and taught in the common schools of the State. In the larger and more wealthy counties, the free schools were well graded and the course of instruction of a high order, while in the thinly settled and poorer counties the old district system was still retained and the course of instruction prescribed was of a low order.” \* \* \*

“But \* \* \* while the constitution has not defined what good common school education is, and has failed to prescribe

a limit it is no part of the duty of the courts of the State to declare \* \* \* what particular branches of study shall constitute a common school education. That may be, and doubtless is, a proper question for the determination of the legislature, and as a law has been enacted by it which does not appear to violate the constitution, it is not the province of the courts to interfere." \* \* \*

"If the law was constitutional, then the levy and collection \* \* \* of a tax to maintain the school was proper, although the course of study prescribed was different from that contemplated by law."<sup>11</sup>

In considering the law relative to the course of study in the common school, one section of the law of 1845 gives the course of study a secondary scope: "No school shall derive any benefit from the public or town fund unless the textbooks used in said schools shall be in the English language: Provided, that this section may not apply to those who may desire to study any foreign language in said school for the purpose of learning the same."<sup>12</sup>

The amendment to the school law in 1865 farther enlarged the right to teach secondary subjects in the common school. After listing elementary subjects, the law said, "that nothing herein contained shall prevent the teaching in common schools, of other and higher branches than those enumerated in this section."<sup>13</sup>

In the case of *Rulison vs. Post*, the Supreme Court decided that the phrase, "other and higher branches", was within the jurisdiction of the common school directors: "We are, therefore, clearly of the opinion that the General Assembly has invested school directors with the power to compel the teaching of other and higher branches than those enumerated, to those willing to receive instruction therein, but has left it purely optional with parents and guardians whether the children under their charge shall study such branches."<sup>14</sup>

In another decision, the same judicial body said that in determining the subjects to be taught in the common school,

<sup>11</sup> Sess. Laws, 1845, p. 64, Sec. 58.

<sup>12</sup> Sess. Laws, 1845, p. 64, Sec. 58.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 1865, p. 121, Sec. 18.

<sup>14</sup> *Rulison vs. Post*, Supreme Court Rep., v. 79, p. 567

the school directors thereby had the constitutional right to determine what subjects constituted other and higher branches. To the court it was clear that the subjects taught in the high school must be founded upon and more advanced than the subjects that were taught in the elementary school; otherwise, the high school defeated the purpose for which it was created. "Here, then, in the powers of common school directors, is the power to decide what branches of study shall be taught in the high school, what text-books shall be used, and to prescribe necessary rules and regulations for the management and government of the school."<sup>15</sup>

Finally, the Supreme Court decided that it was constitutional for the officers of cities to levy taxes for the support of common schools under the provision of the general law.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, the court decided that the constitution recognized a graded school as a free common school. A high school then, as the upper part of the graded school, which had been recognized more or less since 1855, was within the spirit of the constitution. Moreover, what constituted a good common school education would be determined from the practice of communities: the wealthier supporting elementary and higher schools, the poorer, only the primary schools. Since all grades of the common school were in existence at the time of the adoption of the constitution which made the establishment of a good common school system mandatory on the legislature, the assembly acted within its rights in allowing localities to levy a tax for the support of high schools.

Older laws gave a legal basis for the subjects of study in high schools. The latter must teach subjects more advanced than the elementary schools else it defeated the purpose of its creation. Although many other litigations have occurred as to the legality of the high school, these decisions may be said to have given that institution its first judicial standing in Illinois as a part of the free common school system.

Not only have these decisions affirmed the legality of the high school as the upper part of the graded common school system, but they have been at least one factor in the growth of secondary education from about 1880 to 1900. The report of

<sup>15</sup> *People vs. Martin Van Allen*, Supreme Court Rep., 1877, p. 307.

<sup>16</sup> Supreme Court Rep., v. 89, p. 297.

the state superintendent for 1869-70 listed one hundred eight high schools but did not classify them. About the same number were reported for 1880 but the number was doubled at the end of the next decade and increased about thirty-three per cent by 1900. The greatest early increase in high schools was represented by those districts with special charters. The most rapid development from 1880 to 1900 has taken place in cities and villages with boards of education. The following table shows that comparative growth in high schools since the legal decisions that have been cited were made:

Years	1880	1891	1900-02
Township high schools.....	6	9	21
Special charters .....	33	43	34
General law—board .....	47	137	212
General law—directors .....	24	34	71
	—	—	—
Total .....	110	223	338 <sup>17</sup>

Likewise, the list of accredited high schools has rapidly developed. In 1877, when the policy of accrediting began, six high schools were so recognized; in 1900, there were two hundred thirty such institutions. <sup>18</sup>

A summary of the establishment of the free public high school shows that it developed from township organizations, districts under special charter, and general school laws. The earliest legislation for township organization for high school purposes was enacted in 1857. Princeton followed in 1866, and the school law of 1872 contained the township plan. The township laws of 1905, 1911 and 1917 were enacted for the purpose of making township high schools easier of establishment. By the provisions of these distinctive acts, a variety of high school districts have been legalized and established. A somewhat superior organization in comparison with the ordinary district has been possible through the township plan which began when the policy for granting special charters for union school districts was common.

Following the precedent of granting charters to academies by special enactments, the legislature, to 1870, in spe-

<sup>17</sup> State Supt. Reports., 1879-80, 1891-92. 1900-02.

<sup>18</sup> State Supt. Reports, 1900, p. 76.



cial acts sanctioned the creation of certain independent school districts which, in spite of the occasional violation of the general school law, established high schools comparatively early. Since many of the districts with special charters have materially changed in social and economic conditions, the amendment or annulment of these charters would be beneficial.

The law of 1855 hastened the creation of common schools, but made it possible for private institutions to become public. In the more advanced, thickly populated, and wealthier communities, the upper part of the union graded schools constituted the high school, although the latter term was not used denotatively by State Superintendents until 1867, when about one hundred institutions were reported. The number of high schools that were reported increased very slowly for a decade because the standards of what was, or should be, high schools were rapidly changing. However, general provision was made, in 1872, for the creation of an independent board, when the population of a community reached two thousand, with the power to levy a tax on property to support free schools of all grades.

The free public high school may be said to have been established in Illinois when the Supreme Court decided that certain sections of the laws of 1872 and 1874, which referred to the common and high schools, were constitutional. A township high school was a free school, it was a part of the common school, and a tax for its support was constitutional in the judgment of the highest court. Directors were within the limits of the law in requiring and determining what constituted "other and higher branches". Moreover, taxes that were levied in cities for the support of common schools were legal, but no litigation over the high schools was found, where the system had been established under special charter.

## CHAPTER XIV.

---

*A Summary of Some Earlier Influences Affecting Later Development and Practice.*

The earliest attempts to establish schools in Illinois were wholly individualistic; even the policy of the State to the middle of the nineteenth century was that of *laissez faire*. Generally, provisions of various kinds were made for academic and common education, but the carrying into effect of most of these provisions was left almost entirely to individual will and caprice. Democracy was conceived as a plan of action whereby each person did as he pleased.

In contrast to that attitude, socialization is more nearly characteristic of the present plan for secondary education. The State has developed a definite policy of making that education possible for all the youth, since the whole State has been made high school territory, either in the form of non-high school districts that are required to pay the cost of a four-year secondary education, in high school areas, or districts that maintain acceptable institutions. Moreover, territorial limits, instead of following certain surveyed or customary lines, are conceived in terms of a community that has sufficient assessable property, and enough prospective pupils to support an efficient high school. Illinois is pre-eminent in the advance that the community high schools are making. But the State will have taken another important step when it requires that all the children who can profit from secondary education are in school. Then will the democratic ideal of equality of opportunity begin to function more truly.

As the State has developed organizing and administrative functions, the position of the church in relation to public education has changed. The colonial Latin grammar school was a sectarian institution, but the academy divorced the church from the denominational aspect, so that, while the

latter was founded in many instances by the church, its pupils were freed from subscribing to any creed, mode of worship, or religious test. Thus the academy was the transition institution between the denominational colonial Latin grammar school and the secularized public school. From the discussion of the academy in Part I, both the religious and semi-public aspects in the founding, management, and support of the academy have appeared. When the State in its development had reached the point of public support of education, the cardinal principle of the complete separation of the church and the State was essential.

A necessary feature of free public education is that the wealth of the State shall pay for the education of the children of the State. The academy, of course, was supported by the sale or rents of public land, interest from the common school fund, endowments, and tuition. The public domain in Illinois has practically disappeared but the common schools today receive their share of a fund that was created in part by the conditions laid down by Congress for the admission of Illinois in the Union. Although subsequent provisions have been made for the increase of the fund, Illinois, as most other states has not shown that she really believes in providing the greatest opportunity for her children, because the rate of state taxation has remained practically the same since the enactment of the free school law of 1855. Of course the value of property has constantly increased but probably at a less proportion than the growth of the needs of the school. Because a two mills state tax was levied in 1855 on property, is no justification for the same rate and method of taxation in 1919.

Property in land as a basis for taxation was more equitable when land was easily obtainable by all. Real estate was an acceptable index of wealth, but to use that as the principal method of taxation today, exempts large quantities of wealth in other forms. No logical reason exists to place an increasing burden on the rural districts. For that reason, if for no other, a legislature controlled by agricultural interests strives to prevent the increase in taxation.

More progressive kinds of taxation, such as that levied in proportion to one's ability to pay, would make it possible

to raise enough money so that no maximum rate for either state or locality need be written in the law. Hence a larger local fund could be raised for educational purposes, and more state money would be available for distribution.

Illinois still cherishes the out-worn principle of distributing funds according to the school population. The law of 1855 inaugurated a policy of so distributing the state tax and common school fund that the less able communities would be aided by those who were more able to pay, but it was repealed because the rate of assessment was so unequal in each district, and the wealthier sections wanted their state school tax returned to their own districts for their own schools. It is entirely conceivable that certain sections in some parts of southern Illinois have found it impossible to provide both elementary and secondary education at all equal to that which has been provided in the central and northern districts of the State. The latter territory should be taxed by the State and the money so distributed that the children of the former will have a more equitable opportunity.

The abolition of individual tuition payment for non-resident pupils in high school areas as provided by the law of 1917 is a partial equalizing of opportunity for secondary education. The academy and the common school usually received fees before the free school of 1855 made taxation mandatory for the support of the latter and permitted the former to reorganize as a public institution. Even then, there were instances in which tuition was charged for secondary education. Galesburg received a special charter in 1859 which allowed the city council to fix the rate of tuition. For a few years charges were made, so it was said, not to unnecessarily compete with the college academy in town.

At least any school district was permitted to charge tuition for non-resident pupils. Such cities as Springfield, Peoria and Jacksonville made tuition charges for non-resident pupils as soon as the free school law was in operation. Until recently, pupils who lived outside of a school district paid their own tuition in other districts unless their own district consented to pay the rate demanded by the board where the pupil was attending school. Legal residence rather than the ownership of property was necessary to entitle one to free tui-



tion, although children that were apprenticed could claim free tuition in the district in which the man to whom they were apprenticed lived.

In 1913, a law was enacted that provided for the payment of the tuition of high school pupils by the district in which the pupil lived to the district where the pupil attended high school. That law was superceded two years later by a law which allowed the tuition to be paid out of the distributable fund by the county superintendent before the money was apportioned to the county. Finally, the law of 1917 required that the non-high school territory of the State shall pay the tuition of their pupils to the district where a high school is maintained. So far as the State as a whole is concerned, individual tuition payment has been entirely abolished.

Many of the ideas in relation to education that have been conceived at an earlier date have taken a long time to realize in practice. The manual labor aspect of the academies purported to make education economically possible, as well as to give the pupils an intelligent understanding of agriculture and industry so that they could perform these pursuits more advantageously in later life. But it was not until 1877 that much the same arguments began to be cited in favor of manual training in high schools. The educational leaders divided on the question as to whether manual training ought to be a cultural or a vocational subject of study. At the present time, all degrees of these two ideas are mingled but the mixture is clarifying somewhat in that the junior high school is taking the ground that it should provide an opportunity for a large range of vocational subject matter in order that the pupil may better understand the constitution of social life; while the senior high school is maintaining that it should provide vocational training along the line for which the pupil is fitted mentally and socially. Some of the high schools in Illinois are beginning to realize these two conceptions.

Other schools have progressed only a little beyond the conceptions underlying the aim of secondary education in the earlier periods. The colonial Latin grammar school existed in order to give the ministerial class advanced education in preparation for college. The academy was partly a protest against that idea so that the lawyer, for instance, found an op-

portunity for the study of his profession. However the academy ministered to the wants and needs of the upper middle and wealthier people in Illinois. The common school system was a demand by the people for equal rights in education. It found its aims and wants similar, hence it must furnish the same advantages to the public. Therefore, in the earlier years of the high school, programs were copied from the academy. The languages, mathematics, some science and history formed the center of the curricula which were designated as classical, general, English and English classical. The subject matter offered in the high school programs emphasized the idea of formal discipline but a justification for the same material in the high schools now must be based on a different psychology.

The examinations in many of the high schools have shown also little development from formalism. In fact, the method of examination in numerous academies and some of the older high schools had some of the advantages that the present high school examinations have lost. It is true that part of the examination was rigorous, but there was the frequent opportunity for the patrons to come in contact with the work of the school. A stimulus was given to the pupils, while the parents learned the needs of the school. Many of the examination days were occasions for social gatherings which are frequently omitted now. The parents met at the picnic dinner and mingled in a friendly way such as the social center movement is trying to advance. The high school must be a functional institution in the community where it exists, or like the grammar school and the academy, it will be superseded by an institution more in consonance with the life about it.

The academy was unable to reach all of the people, and as a class institution it had to give way to a school for the people. It had, however, a distinct relationship to the common school in preparing teachers, and the normal school is its successor in that respect. A bill of 1835 attempted to set up a state system of county normal academies for the preparation of teachers for the common schools. Some academies were instituted, advertised, and designated as places where prospective teachers could be trained. One of the arguments in favor of the union graded school was that it prepared teachers for the lower departments. County superintendents and

teachers' conventions urged the formation of higher schools for teachers. The State created the first normal school in 1857 and others since, as well as making it legal, in 1869, for the establishment of county normal schools.

But the high schools seem never to have lost the idea. Chicago created a department in the high school in 1856 for the instruction of teachers. That course continued in the same institution for several years and then was separated and enlarged into the Chicago Normal School. Little evidence exists that the movement found more than a scholastic encouragement in the high schools over the State until the last two decades. One was supposed to be well qualified to teach the common branches if he had the additional training of the high school. Township high schools have recently taken a real interest in preparing rural teachers. Those institutions are better able to assume the function of preparing rural teachers than the city high schools whose problems are different. Therefore, the State might subsidize teacher training courses in certain designated township high schools in order to encourage and develop this movement that has begun to function more satisfactorily for the country districts.

A reorganization, however, is needed for the county educational department. When Illinois was admitted as a State, the type of local government adopted was that of a county commissioners' court elected at large. One of the commissioners had the important function of supervising the public land of the county, as school commissioner, therefore, his functions consisted of little else. The office of county superintendent grew out of the commissioner office. In spite of the suggestions that the county superintendent supervise the rural schools, that officer's functions have remained inspectoral and clerical.

A county board should be elected to represent the people, but which has the duty to select a county chief executive officer whose business it would be to administer the schools of the county as the city superintendent manages those of the city. Instead of the county being supreme in itself, as many of the Illinois counties are, it should become a unit in the educational administration of the whole State.

While some superior men have held the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and while the duties

and importance of that office have increased, the same method of election occurs as was established by the law of 1855. Political election has little educational significance, and political prejudices and ideals can be satisfied in the election of the governor who should use his appointive power to select a state board of education. The most important business of the state board would be to appoint a chief executive officer without regard to residence, party, religion, race or sex. This officer should fill the highest educational position in the State not excepting the presidency of the state university. Among the assistants that the state superintendent appointed should be one whose concern would be chiefly with secondary education. The entire State, with the county as the educational administrative unit, could then be developed according to its needs and the interests of any locality.

With the creation of state and county supervisory units, it would be possible to achieve and advance the aims of the educational institutes that began in the early history of the common school. In the more progressive places, by 1850, institutes were held that had a genuine educational significance because superior institute leaders conducted local and state conventions as schools, rather than as social conventions which are held today. Granted the value of the inspirational institute, teachers of the elementary and secondary school ought to be so organized in their conventions that they could be graded and classified according to their needs. The morning sessions might be thus organized in classes which actually recited. The conductor and teachers would have an opportunity to discuss their problems in common. The afternoon should be spent in actual study of a problem for the meeting the following morning. An institute so conducted for a week, and the problems so studied, followed up for the year by the state and county supervisors, would be a vital force in the elementary and secondary education of today.

Such a plan would involve a closer connection of the school with the public libraries and a farther development of the school libraries. Some of the earlier academies were to perform the function of supplying books to the surrounding public. A little later the State attempted to establish school libraries but a recent survey has shown that the Illinois high



schools, to say nothing of the elementary schools, are inadequately supplied with library facilities. It is true that standards for accrediting have required certain library equipment but the development in supplying magazines, newspapers, reference books and fiction for secondary education is just in its beginning.

Also, as was suggested in the last chapter, the State has just started on the course of disregarding district lines for a more reasonable basis for the establishment of high school centers. A brighter period is commencing for the sanctity of tradition and custom are being called in question. The limitation of secondary education to four years, the length of the school year, part of the subject matter in the curricula, the sharp break between the high and the elementary schools and much of the school legislation are to be regarded as historical accidents, rather than inviolable and sacred principles.

The history of the secondary institutions, the laws and practices that surrounded the academy and the early high school, give an intelligent conception of secondary education in Illinois at the present time. Experience thus becomes an intelligent guide for future action.

## CHAPTER XV.

---

*Summary and Conclusion.*

Illinois is an excellent example of a midwestern state that was settled by people from the older states of the East and the South for the purpose usually, of raising their economic status by taking advantage of the relatively free western land. When the State was admitted as a member of the Union, the congressional land grants, the basis of which was created by the Northwest Ordinances, were accepted by the people for educational purposes. The earliest schools were individualistic and sporadic attempts that were attended with meager success in a hostile, wilderness country. More concentrated action occurred when the legislature, beginning in 1818, adopted the policy of granting special charters to groups of individuals for the creation of semi-public academies. Some of the requirements were to make it possible for the poor of the community to be educated at public expense; other provisions looked forward to the time when all classes in the locality, including the girls, should receive free tuition if the funds of the institution permitted it. All charters required religious freedom, but allowed the administrative board to perform any other function that was not contrary to law. The purposes for which the academy was established, the form of administrative organization, and the financial support varied.

The aims of the academy were to disseminate useful knowledge; to give women high intellectual and moral culture; to fit youth for the various duties of life; to prepare teachers for the common schools; to promote science and literature; to develop a sound physical body; to act as libraries; to establish a system of manual labor, and to educate the children of the common man. The manner of election, the number, and the term of the trustees followed no general rule, although the powers conferred on them were usually those

that were granted to bodies politic and corporate. The support came from the rent or the sale of school lands; a share in the common school fund; gifts; endowments; the sale of shares of stock; and, tuition.

Much of the machinery that existed for the administrative organization and supervision of education was found in the church. Missionary preachers opened academies in the centers of population to educate the youth, as well as to prepare ministers of the gospel. McKendreean, Alton, and Illinois Colleges, respectively representing Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian-Congregational efforts, united their strength before the legislature granted them charters. Following the period of the legislature-church struggle, charters were freely given to academies, but many of them were modeled upon college charters which had shown the unmistakable influence of New England and the Yale movement in Illinois.

The State went little farther than to grant charters to groups of individuals for academic purposes, or to recognize permissively any unchartered institution that kept within the bounds of law. The results were that the standards for admission, tuition fees, the length of the school year, and the length of the school day were in no sense uniform throughout the State. However, the academy did retain the core of subjects of the Latin grammar school, around which other subjects were added to prepare students for useful and professional positions in life. Besides the ancient languages and arithmetic, modern languages, more mathematical subjects, some social sciences, natural and physical sciences, philosophy, religion, cultural and artistic subjects, and manual labor, were added. Formal examinations were conducted, at the close of each term, by a local committee of prominent men, usually ministers, to pass judgment on the efficiency of instruction. Occasionally, a farsighted, liberal minded academic principal indicated some of the social values of an education.

A utilitarian educational philosophy was introduced in the West by the manual labor movement which maintained: that only the useful in schools was valuable; that mental and physical work were practicable only when they were united; that conjoint mental and physical work were economical because time was saved in gaining knowledge and learning a

trade; that manual labor connected with the schools was far superior to harmful play; that new and better opportunities were opened up through which a living could be made; that manual labor connected with scholastic pursuits, above all, was democratic, and that the cost of theoretical and practical education was within the reach of a larger number. The editors, churches, missionary societies, and the early educational leaders were convinced of the value of the system that was advocated by Neef and Maclure. Consequently, manual labor schools were created, and that feature was incorporated in several of the literary institutions. Turner followed up the idea, enlarged it and made it more specific in his plan for and the advocacy of a system of education in which the common man would have equal advantages with the professional classes. Partly due to his efforts, the Morrill Land Grant Act was passed by congress, and the Illinois Industrial University was chartered. A decade later, the high schools began to introduce some features of the manual labor idea in the system of manual training.

The academy was a well established institution in Illinois by 1850. Before that date, scarcely any other means existed in the State by which a useful, cultural, or professional secondary education could be obtained. In spite of the pronouncements that the academy was a frontier institution in which all classes could mingle, it served only a limited number of the population who lived near its doors and were able to pay the price for instruction. Therefore, the next step in the discussion is the role that the common school played in the education of the children of the State.

At the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the apprenticeship system of education was dying out in the older states of the East and the South. However, the emigrants from the latter had carried that custom to Illinois, apprenticeship laws had been passed, and indenture agreements were made with some white youth and negroes, but the system was not as extensive as it had been in the colonial days because of the increasing opportunities for education, and the growing sentiments of the humanitarian philosophy in the rights of all individuals for freedom and equality.

To provide that liberty, and to insure the permanence of free institutions in Illinois, the education of the youth of the



State by means of a system of free common schools, was necessary. The law of 1825 provided that a school system should be established, that the schools should be free to all children, and that the schools thus created should be supported by two per cent of all the yearly state revenues, and by a local general property tax. Governor Coles was probably the author of the bill, rather than Senator Duncan, and drew his ideas for a complete system of education consisting of primary, secondary and university instruction from Jefferson's plan, with which he was familiar. The first concern was with primary instruction, which the law of 1825 made possible. Five free school districts were ordered established in Madison county by the county commissioners within a few months after the enactment of the law. No complaint was made in the Edwardsville paper or in the county court, although objection must have been marked in some of the other counties because the legislature annulled the local tax clause, in 1827, and the state two per cent section in 1829. From that time, to 1855, common schools in general, were supported by the parents of the children who attended the schools.

The efforts of the educational and political leaders of the State were redoubled, after the annulment of the law of 1825, in order to create a free common school system. An educational survey of Illinois, and the assembling of information about educational progress of the eastern states, were the bases on which a teacher association addressed the people of the State and sent a memorial to the legislature on the subject of common schools. The sections of the bill which provided for free schools and the establishment of an academy in each county for the training of teachers, were defeated. Some of the academies did supply a scholastic education for the common school teacher, but there was no state supported normal school until 1857. Little had been expected of the common teacher in qualifications, little of value was returned in the way of service, but the wages were equally as good as those paid by the older eastern and New England States.

Four agencies through which the common school was aided in its development and in its establishment as a free public institution, were notable. 1. Prominent educational leaders were: many of the governors; the Illinois College

group; such editors as Judge Hall, John S. Wright, and Charles E. Hovey; the missionary circuit riders, and resident ministers; state superintendents; legislators; state agents, and a few nationally prominent men in the persons of Jefferson, Clinton, Mann and Barnard. 2. Many of the newspapers of the State, *The Illinois Monthly Magazine*, *The Common School Advocate*, *The Prairie Farmer*, and *The Illinois Teacher*, were the literary means devoted to the cause of the common school. 3. Some of the institutions that increased the general intelligence of the people, and created a desire for better educational opportunities, were: *The Ladies' Aid Association for the Education of Females*; working-men's organizations; public libraries; Sunday schools; and academies. 4. Enthusiasm, harmony, and co-operation among the friends of the common school in the interest of enlightenment, were developed by educational convention.

The legislature partly followed the advice of the Peoria Teachers' Convention by creating a State Superintendent of Common Schools in the person of the Secretary of State, and allowing a tax to be levied for the support of common schools in any district where two-thirds of the legal voters so decided. The constitutional convention provided, in the first draft of the constitution, for the levying of a tax for the maintenance of free schools, and appointment of a separate Superintendent of Common Schools, but the final draft of the constitution of 1847, was singularly silent on the subject of education.

The demands became so urgent that the governor, in 1854,<sup>1</sup> appointed a state superintendent whom the legislature charged with the duty of providing a bill for the reorganization of the entire common school system. The bill was passed in 1855. A state tax of two mills was levied on every dollar of property and the income added to the common school fund; a local tax was levied by the trustees of both township and district to help maintain at least one free school in every district for six months in the year. The state common school fund was distributed in such a manner that two-thirds was given to the county on the basis of the number of white children between the ages of five and twenty-one years; the remaining one-third was distributed on the basis of the number

---

<sup>1</sup> See foot-note following reference 13, Chapter XI.

of townships, or parts of townships in each county. The money due the townships was to be distributed in proportion to the number of days of school that were actually taught.

The method of distribution of the state school fund, which benefited the poorer sections, as well as the richer districts, was a powerful argument in favor of free schools. Such institutions were democratic; they were the means by which children could be educated at home; they were located where they were needed, and they were inexpensive. Nevertheless, the successful academy had superior teachers; they were better equipped, and they had more extensive subjects of study. Thus two sharply defined groups existed in the State; the one favored the common school, the other favored the academy. At one extreme, the free school was placed in a class with free negroes; at the other, it was eulogized.

The common school was passing through the process of grading in the period under consideration so that it was being divided into primary, grammar, and higher departments. More of the first were needed, less of the second, and still fewer of the last, to serve the educational requirements of a community. To facilitate the process of grading, which provided better opportunities for the children, the practice of joining districts developed in which a higher department could serve the entire union territory. The legislature recognized the right of unionization in legalizing the action of certain directors, who had joined their districts, even before the free school law made a general provision for grading.

The high school, usually designated as a part of the common school system, thus had one root of its origin in the common school. Sometimes, the city council, as in Chicago, created a high school as a part of the common school system, but for a few years the highest part of the elementary schools, overlapped the lowest part of the high school. Neither had yet defined entirely its sphere of action. The other main root of the high school was in the academy. The latter institutions that were especially strong dominated the secondary field for several years, even after the free school law was passed because they were already in existence, because the conservatives hated to forsake them for the common schools, because many people objected to paying a tax for the education of

other children than their own, and because they were better equipped with superior teachers, apparatus, buildings, and a more suitable program of subjects. The weaker academies were glad of the chance to reorganize as free schools because the means of support was at hand. In the long run, however, the academies failed to hold their own with the free public high school which was under way before the Civil War.

A second proof that the common schools were providing some secondary education is found in the examination of the character of their subjects of study. What were usually designated as elementary subjects were taught in the common schools, but many instances existed where higher branches received equal and even more emphasis. The explanation is found in the fact that the academies supplied a great number of common school teachers who naturally taught the subjects that they had learned in the academy. Moreover, the common school took the academy as its pattern; what was considered the means of a cultural education in the latter, were equally appropriate for the common man's children. Hence the free public high school based much of its subject matter on the academic program, which was the current secondary practice, and which had a distinct philosophy underlying it.

By 1860 the common schools, as had been suggested in the process of gradation, considered that some subject matter was more difficult than other material. Before passing to a higher department, the next lower one must have been completed. Hence the high school required the passing of more or less formal examinations as a condition of entrance.

The law of 1825 which provided for free schools was repealed a few years later; a second effort was made in 1835, for free common schools. After several previous efforts, the first relatively permanent free school law was passed in 1855 by which taxation was mandatory. The common school system, with its upper part, the high school, was supported at public expense.

For a considerable period of time before the passage of the free school law, townships were incorporated for educational purposes under the control of elected trustees whose duty it was to district the township to suit the wishes and convenience of the people. The law of 1855, as amended in



1857, 1859 and 1865, provided for the union of districts which were to be under the control of a publicly elected board of trustees. Since high schools were very likely to have been created when districts united, the third distinguishing characteristic of the free public high school was that it was controlled by a public board.

However, several years elapsed before the high school in Illinois had defined its sphere of action, and before it had grown into the affections of the people. When the Supreme Court decisions, between 1875 and 1879, had settled the constitutionality of certain sections of the school law relative to the common school and the high school, the latter institution may be said to have been firmly established. The gap had been bridged between secondary and common school education. No longer was the academy the institution that provided the elementary and secondary education for the wealthier people; nor was the common school the institution of the poor man alone. Instead of the continuation of the beginning of a parallel system of class education, democracy in Illinois had made a vertical system in which a ladder extended for all from the primary grades to the university.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY.

## Documents, Reports, Records.

- The New Regime, 1765-1767. Spfg. 1916.  
 Cahokia Records, 1778-1790. Spfg., 1907.  
 Kaskaskia Records, 1778-1790. Spfg., 1909.  
 Statutes of Ohio and of the Northwest Territory from 1788 to 1833 inclusive. Cin., 1835.  
 Laws of Indiana Territory, 1801-1806 inclusive. Pub. 1886.  
 Laws of the Territory of Illinois, 1809-1811. Spfg., 1906.  
 Illinois Territorial Laws, 1812-1818. Russellville, Ky. & Kaskaskia.  
 Illinois Session Laws, 1818-1830. Kas. Van. Spfg.  
 Illinois Senate and House Journals, 1818-1860. Van. Spfg.  
 Illinois Senate and House Reports, 1830-1854. Van. Spfg.  
 Journal of the Constitutional Convention of the State of Illinois. Spfg., 1847.  
 Journal of the Constitutional Convention of the State of Illinois. Spfg., 1870.  
 Debates and Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention. Spfg., 1870.  
 Constitution of the State of Illinois, adopted in 1870. Spfg., 1887.  
 Reports of cases at law and in chancery, argued and determined in the Supreme Court of Illinois. N. L. Freeman, Reporter. Vols. 68-98, 1873-1881. Spfg.  
 The Governors' Letter-books, 1818-1853, Vols. 1, 2. Spfg., 1909.  
 Executive Documents, 1818-1850. Van., Spfg.  
 Reports of the State Superintendent, 1854-1916. Spfg.  
 School Law, 1859, 1872, 1906. Spfg.  
 County Commissioners' Records of Edwards County, 1815-1832.  
 County Commissioners' Records of Madison County, 1818-1830.  
 Apprenticeship Indentures of Madison County, 1813-1893.  
 School Commissioners' Journal, Coles County, 1836-1860.  
 Probate Journal, Shelby County, No. 1, 1839-1849.  
 Senate Debates, 22 Congress, I Session, 80.  
 House Debates, 22 Congress, I Session, 3154.  
 Chicago Board of Education Reports, 1854-1880. Chi.  
 St. Louis School Reports, 1854-1870. St. Louis.  
 Reports of the M. E. Miss. Soc., 1819-1842. N. Y. Reports of the Foreign Miss. Soc. in the Valley of the Mississippi, 1833-1840.  
 Yale College Charters, 1701, 1745, in Yale Bulletin for 1913.  
 Sixth Annual Report of the Society for the Spread of Collegiate and Theological Education in the West.  
 Illinois College Catalogues, 1849-1860.  
 Knox College Catalogues, 1859-1861.  
 Reports of the Ladies' Educational Aid Association, 1833-1883. Jacksonville.  
 Reports of the United States Census Bureau, 1800-1860.

**Newspapers, Magazines, Letters.**

- Sangamo Journal, 1832-1847. Spfg.  
 Illinois Journal, 1847-1850. Spfg.  
 Illinois Daily Journal, 1849-1858. Spfg.  
 Governor Coles' file of newspapers, 1822-1826, which includes the Illinois Intelligencer, Illinois Gazette, Kaskaskia Republican, and the Illinois Republican.  
 Spectator, 1819-1824. Edwardsville.  
 Western Intelligencer, 1816-1817. Kas.  
 Illinois Intelligencer, 1818-1819. Kas.  
 Pioneer, 1829. Rock Spring.  
 Pioneer and Western Baptist, Rock Spring. 1832.  
 Illinois Intelligencer, 1821-1832. Van.  
 Expositor, 1844; Hancock Eagle, 1846; Neighbor, 1843-1845; New Citizen, 1846. Nauvoo.  
 Hancock Democrat, 1844; Message, 1843-1844; Signal, 1841-1853. Warsaw.  
 Buffalo Commercial Advertiser, March 24, 1846. Buffalo.  
 New York Weekly Herald, Jan 15, 1842, on Nauvoo, Uni. N. Y.  
 Illinois Monthly Magazine, Vols. 1, 2, 1831-1833. Van.  
 Common School Advocate, 1837. Jacksonville.  
 Union Agriculturist and Western Prairie Farmer, 1841-1843. Chi.  
 Prairie Farmer, 1843-1855. Chi.  
 Eclectic Journal of Education and Literary Review, 1850-1851. Chi.  
 Illinois Teacher, 1855-1872. Peoria.  
 American Journal of Education, 1826-1829. Bos.  
 American Annals of Education and Instruction, 1831-1838. Bos.  
 Quarterly Register of the American Education Society, 1831-1842. Bos.  
 American Journal of Education, 1855-1880.  
 Niles Weekly Register, 1811-1849. Baltimore.  
 Yale Review, 1843-1860. N. H.  
 The New Englander, 1843-1860. N. H.  
 The Nation, 1865-1873. N. Y.  
 The Home Missionary, 1828-1860. N. Y.  
 Illinois State Historical Library Collections, Vols. 1-12. 1903-1915.  
 Chicago Historical Society Collections.  
 American Historical Review, April 1900, p. 538.  
 Maclure's Opinions on various subjects dedicated to the Industrial Producers. New Harmony, Ind., 1831.  
 The Western Gazetteer, 1817 (Brown). Auburn, N. Y.  
 Gazetteer of the States of Illinois and Missouri, 1823 (Beck). Albany.  
 A Guide for Emigrants, 1831 (Peck). Bos.  
 A Gazetteer of Illinois, 1834 (Peck). Jacksonville.  
 Illinois in 1837 (Mitchell). Phil.  
 Peoria Directory (Drown). Peoria, 1844.  
 Illinois Annual Register and Business Directory. Chi. 1847.  
 Letters of Rev. T. Flint from Illinois and Missouri, 1816. Bos., 1826.  
 Birkbeck, M., Letters from Illinois. Lon. 1818.  
 Flower, R., Letters from Lexington and Illinois. Lon., 1819.  
 Flower, R., Letters from Illinois, 1820-1821, containing an account of the English settlement at Albion. Lon., 1822.  
 Hollister, E., Remarks on the States of Illinois and Missouri in the Christian Spectator, Vol. 20, 1823.  
 Hall, J., Letters from the West. Lon., 1828.

**Biography and Memorials.**

- Sturtevant, Julian M., *An Autobiography of*. N. Y., 1896.  
 Cartwright, Peter, *The Backwoods Preacher*. Cin., 1856.  
*The Life of Jonathan Baldwin Turner by his daughter, Mary Turner Carriell*, 1911.  
*Forty Years of Pioneer Life; Memoir of John Mason Peck*. Babcock. Phil., 1864.  
*Biographical Sketch of Joseph Duncan, by Julia Duncan Kirby*, 1888.  
 Peck, and one hundred years of home Missions, 1817-1917, deBlois. N. Y. 1917.  
 A Sketch by J. M. Sturtevant in Cong. Quart., April and June, 1875, of Theron Baldwin.  
 Douthitt, Jasper, *Autobiography*. Bos. (no date).  
 A Sketch of Edward Coles by E. B. Washburne. Chi., 1882.  
*Notable Men of Illinois, The Chicago Daily Journal*, 1912.  
*Biographical Sketches of the Class of 1828, Yale College*, O. P. Hubbard, 1898. N. H.  
*History of the Class of 1834 of Yale College with Biographical Sketches*, N. H., 1875.  
*Our Pilgrim Fathers, A Symposium*, Illinois State Teachers' Association, Spfg., 1897.  
*Illinois College Quarter Century Celebration*, 1855. N. Y., 1855.  
 Bishop Chase, address delivered before the convention of Protestant Episcopal Church, Spfg., 1845. St. Louis, 1845.

**History, Travel, Description.**

- Reynolds, John, *My Own Times, 1800-1854*. Belleville, 1855.  
 Edwards, N. W., *History of Illinois from 1778 to 1833; and the life and times of Ninian Edwards*. 1870.  
 Thwaites, R. G., *Western Travels, 1748-1846*. Vols. 1-32. 1904-1907.  
 Ford, Thomas, *History of Illinois, 1818 to 1847*. Chi. 1859.  
 Boggess, A. C., *The Settlement of Illinois, 1778-1830*. Chi., 1908.  
 Brown, H., *The History of Illinois*. N. Y., 1844.  
 Gerhard, F., *Illinois as it is, its History*. Chi., 1857.  
 Jones, A. D., *Illinois and the West*. Bos., 1838.  
 Peck, J. M., *Annals of the West*. 1850.  
 Hall, J., *Sketches from the West, Vols. 1-2*. Phil., 1835.  
 Wilkey, *Western Emigration*. N. Y., 1839.  
 Mills, S. J. & D. Smith, *Report of a Missionary Tour*. Andover, 1815.  
 Loomis, C. A., *A journey on Horseback through the Great West*.  
 Ferrall, *Rambles through the United States*, 1832.  
 Farnham, Mrs. E. W., *Life in Prairie Land*. N. Y., 1846.  
*Stories of Pioneer Mothers of Illinois, Mss. in Ill. State Hist. Lib*  
 Reynolds, John, *The School Advocate*. Belleville, 1857.  
 Monroe, James, *Writings*, vol. 1.  
 Carr, Clark E., *My Day and Generation*.

**Miscellaneous Secondary Material.**

- Snyder, J. F., *Adam W. Snyder and his period in Illinois, History, 1817-1842*. Virginia, Ill., 1906.  
 Smith, L. W., *Illinois High Schools*. Spfg., 1917.  
 Hollister, H. A., *Township High Schools in Illinois*. Uni. Ill. Bul., vol. 8, no. 1.  
 Lobdell, G. M., *Development of Free Schools in Illinois; unpublished Master's Thesis, Columbia University*, 1912.



- Steele, W. L., *Galesburg Public Schools, their history and work.* Galesburg, 1911.
- Powell, B. E., *Semi-Centennial History of the University of Illinois.*
- Harker, O. A., *Illinois Educational Corporations under Special Charter.* 1916. Reprint of *Illinois Law Review*, 1916.
- Harding, S. B., *Indiana University, 1820-1904.* Bloomington, 1904.
- Mayo, A. D., *History of Education in the Northwest.* House Doc. 54 Congress, 1 Session, no. 5.
- Brown, E. E., *The Making of Our Middle Schools.* N. Y., 1905.
- Monroe, Paul, *Unpublished Lectures on the History of Education in the United States, Teachers College, 1917-1918.*
- Monroe, Paul, *Cyclopedia of Education, vols. 1-5.* N. Y., 1911-1915.
- Brown, S. W., *Secularization of American Education.* N. Y., 1912.
- Maddox, W. A., *Free School Idea in Virginia before the Civil War.* N. Y., 1913.
- National Educational Associations Proceedings, 1901.*
- Pooley, W. V., *The Settlement of Illinois from 1830 to 1850.* Mad., 1908.
- Buck, S. J., *Illinois in 1818.* Spfg. 1917.
- Harris, N. D., *Negro Servitude in Illinois.* Chi., 1904.
- Patterson, *Early Society in Southern Illinois in Fergus Hist. Ser. no. 14.*
- McMaster, *History of the People of the United States, vols. 1-8.* N. Y., 1913-1914.
- Dewey, D. R., *Financial History of the United States.* Lon., 1903.
- Schurz, C., *Henry Clay, vol. 1-2.* American Statesmen Series.
- Cheyney, E. P., *Anti-Rent Agitation in New York.* Uni. Penn., 1887.
- Shaw, A. B., *Local Government in Illinois.* Johns Hopkins Uni. Studies in History and Economics. vol. 1.
- Windin, *Influence of the Erie Canal.* Uni. Wis. Studies, 1900.

## VITA

The author of this dissertation, PAUL E. BELTING, was born at Illiopolis, Sangamon County, Illinois, on September 5, 1886.

He received his early education in the public schools of Illinois, graduating from the Mattoon, Illinois, High School in 1907. He was a student in the Eastern Illinois State Normal School at Charleston, Illinois, and upon graduation in 1909 became the principal of the Martinsville, Illinois, High School for one year. He was a student in the University of Illinois from 1910 to 1912, from which institution he received the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1912. He was principal of the Globe, Arizona, High School in 1912-1913, and principal of the Oskaloosa, Iowa, High School from 1913 to 1917. He did graduate work at the University of Illinois during the summer sessions of 1912, 1916, and 1917. He was an assistant in games at the Horace Mann School for Boys, New York City, and a student in Teachers College, Columbia University from 1917 to 1919 and received the Master of Arts degree in 1918.













UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 001 004 874 2

UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES  
LIBRARY



